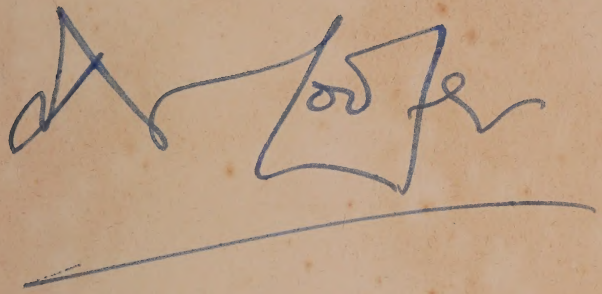
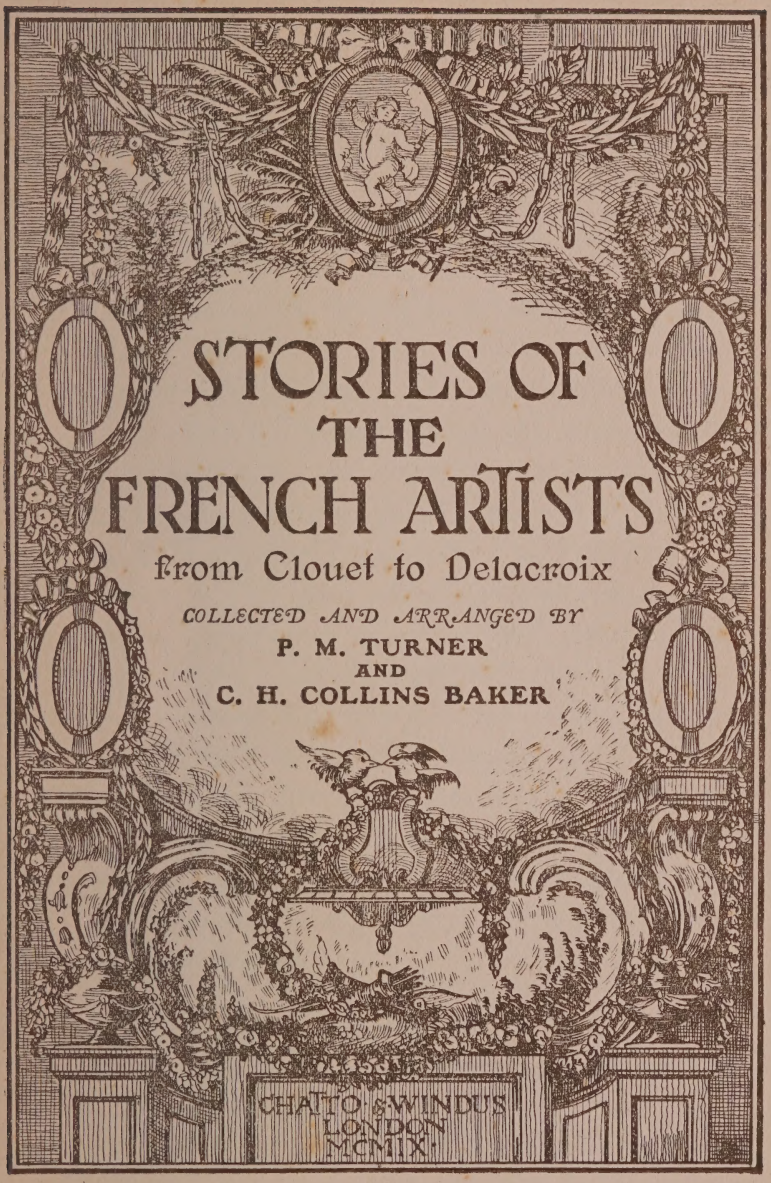
# STORIES OF THE FRENCH ARTISTS

7/6



# STORIES OF THE FRENCH ARTISTS

PORTRAIT OF MADAME SOPHIE DE FRANCE
*(By Nattier. Versailles)*


STORIES OF
THE
FRENCH ARTISTS
from Clouet to Delacroix
COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY
P. M. TURNER
AND
C. H. COLLINS BAKER
CHATTO & WINDUS
LONDON
MCMIX

The title on the reverse of this page is adapted from the title-page of an edition of the "Contes de La Fontaine," *British Museum*, 11474, i. 6.

*All rights reserved*

# PREFACE

THE function of the series to which this book belongs intrinsically precludes discussion along expertly critical ways. The prime object is to put forward the human side of the artists rather than the artistic. At the same time, the authors, recognising the close-linked sequence of French art, have attempted where the need was imperative to display that chain, and the human and relative significance of the artists' work. For, after all, the importance of people, and of artists in especial, to posterity lies in the interpenetration of their work and their environment, and in their humanity as reflected in their output. On such things, rather than on external accidents, the potential lot of any man, or irrelevant gossip, the inevitable fate of all, depends the significance of the great painters.

Mr Turner is responsible for Chapters I to XVII; Mr Collins Baker for the rest of the book.

# CONTENTS


| CHAP. | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| II. | THE EARLY PAINTERS OF FRANCE | 9 |
| III. | THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RENAISSANCE | 15 |
| IV. | THE CLOUETS | 25 |
| V. | THE FOLLOWERS OF THE CLOUETS | 36 |
| VI. | LE NAIN AND NICHOLAS POUSSIN | 44 |
| VII. | GASPARD POUSSIN AND CLAUDE LORRAINE | 52 |
| VIII. | VOUET, BOURDON, LE SUEUR | 61 |
| IX. | THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV—COLBERT AND LE BRUN | 68 |
| X. | MIGNARD, VAN DER MEULEN, AND COYPEL | 79 |
| XI. | THE PORTRAIT PAINTERS RIGAUD AND LARGILLIÈRE | 88 |
| XII. | DESPORTES AND OUDRY | 97 |
| XIII. | THE REGENCY AND THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV | 105 |
| XIV. | ANTHONY WATTEAU | 111 |
| XV. | LANCRET AND PATER | 123 |
| XVI. | CHARDIN | 135 |
| XVII. | LATOUR AND PERRONNEAU | 153 |
| XVIII. | FRANÇOIS LEMOINE | 166 |
| XIX. | JEAN FRANÇOIS DE TROY | 174 |

| CHAP. | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| XX. | CARLE VAN LOO | 182 |
| XXI. | FRANÇOIS BOUCHER | 190 |
| XXII. | FRAGONARD | 206 |
| XXIII. | JOSEPH VERNET | 226 |
| XXIV. | HUBERT ROBERT | 234 |
| XXV. | JEAN BAPTISTE GREUZE | 241 |
| XXVI. | PIERRE PRUD'HON | 251 |
| XXVII. | PORTRAIT PAINTERS OF LOUIS XV AND XVI | 269 |
| XXVIII. | JACQUES LOUIS DAVID | 282 |
| XXIX. | JEAN DOMINIQUE AUGUSTE INGRES | 303 |
| XXX. | EUGÈNE DELACROIX | 319 |

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## COLOURED PLATES


PORTRAIT OF MADAME SOPHIE DE FRANCE (*from the painting by Nattier at Versailles*) *Frontispiece*

PAGE

PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH OF AUSTRIA (*from the painting by François Clouet in the Louvre*) . . . . . *To face* 34

PORTRAIT OF THE DUC DE GUISE (*from the painting by Corneille de Lyon*) . . . „ 40

ALLEGORY (*from the painting by Natoire in the Collection of Monsieur le Comte Robert de Montesquieu*) . . . . . „ 182

THE PICNIC (*from the painting by Carle van Loo in the Louvre*) . . . . . „ 186

THE MILKMAID (*from the painting by Greuze in the Louvre*) . . . . . „ 246

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AND HER DAUGHTER (*from the painting by Madame Vigée Lebrun in the Louvre*) . . . . . „ 278

PORTRAIT OF MADAME SERIZAIT (*from the painting by David in the Louvre*) . . „ 296

## PLAIN PLATES


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| PORTRAIT GROUP. (*Le Nain*) . . . | *To face* | 44 |
| BACCHANALE. (*N. Poussin*) . . . . . | „ | 50 |
| THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBECCA. (*Claude*) . . . . . | „ | 58 |
| PORTRAIT OF JELAPOTTE. (*Coypel*) . . | „ | 86 |
| PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV. (*Rigaud*) . . | „ | 88 |
| PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER. (*Largillière*) . . | „ | 96 |
| PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST. (*Desportes*) . | „ | 98 |
| EMBARKATION FOR CYTHERA. (*Watteau*) . | „ | 118 |
| FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE. (*Pater*) . . . . . | „ | 132 |
| PASTEL PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST. (*Chardin*) | „ | 140 |
| MADAME DE POMPADOUR. (*Boucher*) . . | „ | 158 |
| PORTRAIT OF A GIRL. (*Perronneau*) . . | „ | 164 |
| DIANA. (*Boucher*). . . . . | „ | 190 |
| MADAME DE POMPADOUR. (*Latour*) . . | „ | 200 |
| LA LEÇON. (*Fragonard*) . . . . . | „ | 220 |
| VIEW IN A PARK. (*Hubert Robert*) . . | „ | 236 |
| L'ACCORDÉE DE VILLAGE. (*Greuze*) . . | „ | 242 |
| LANDSCAPE. (*Moreau*) . . . . . | „ | 256 |

PAGE

PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER'S WIFE. (*Vestier*) *To face* 269

MADAME DANGER. (*Tocqué*) . . . . „ 272

THE DAUPHINE. (*Drouais*) . . . . . „ 274

PORTRAIT OF CHERUBINI. (*Ingres*) . . „ 312

LA SOURCE. (*Ingres*) . . . . . „ 314

THE TAKING OF CONSTANTINOPLE. (*Delacroix*) „ 330

# BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE PRINCIPAL BOOKS CONSULTED


BOUCHER.—Mantz. De Nolhac. Arsène Houssaye. "Hist. de l'Art Française, XVIIIth Cent."

DAVID.—J. L. David. Lecuze. Chesneau. C. Saunier.

DELACROIX.—Tournieux. Véron. Bussy. Mirecourt. Journal. Lettres.

FRAGONARD.—Portalis. Mauclaire. De Nolhac.

GREUZE.—Prost. Macklin. C. Normand.

INGRES.—Balze. Wyzewa. Chesneau. Uzanne.

LEMOINE.—"Dézallier d'Argenville." "Mémoires Inédites" (Mantz).

LOO, C. VAN.—Houssaye.

NATTIER.—"Mémoires Inedites" (Mantz).

PRUD'HON, P.—Delacroix ("Revue des Deux Mondes, 1846"). De Goncourt. Bricon.

ROBERT, H.—Gabillot.

DE TROY.—"Mémoires Inédites." Dézallier d'Argenville.

VIGÉE LEBRUN, MME.—De Nolhac. Selden. "Mémoires."

PATTISON (Lady Dilke).—French Painters.

BLANC, ALEX. A.—"Histoires des Peintres Français."

"Les Arts."

"Gazette des Beaux Arts."

# STORIES OF THE FRENCH ARTISTS

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In no country, perhaps, has art reflected the life and character of the nation to the extent that it has done in France, from which it follows that French art can never, except in certain of its phases, be so universally acceptable as that of Italy. And this because Italian art had a world-wide message to deliver, a message which has moulded thought and custom, and has done more to shape the destiny of modern art and thought than any other since that of the Greeks. A full-blooded and masculine art, whose followers were not afraid to invade the highest realms of religious idealism and symbolism, and yet could grasp, as many of the Venetians did, the stern facts of materialism, was destined to wield a remarkable power in the midst of the

civilising influences which were springing up all over Europe. We feel, on coming into contact with the Italian renaissance, that the men who produced these wonderful manifestations of the inner soul of man must have played a great part in the making of the history of their own age. Viewed in the perspective of time, they loom as giants; their work far surpassed in grandeur the puny achievements of their patrons. Florence herself would be shorn of much of her glory had she not been mother or foster-mother of that mighty array of painters and sculptors whose names are household words. Italian art can be guaged by a universal standard; for though from one point of view it is intensely national, in the truer sense it is universal. The stupendousness of its ideals, and the means it makes use of for the translating of those ideals into communicable language, compel universal wonder.

Italian art is, perhaps, the only art which can be studied or understood apart from its historical setting. French art is quite different. It is indissolubly bound up with the history of France. To approach it without consideration of the historical events which called it into being is surely to deprive it of the greater

part of its interest. French art of any kind or period is, perhaps, the most perfect outcome of the contemporary life and customs of a nation the world has ever had. It was purely national, and cared nothing for the outside world; this is especially true of that great period which had its beginning in the reign of Louis XIV, and lasted without interruption till the uprising of the school of 1830. This explains the remarkable adaptability it manifested under changing conditions. Had a revolution of the magnitude of that of France occurred in any other country, it would probably have brought art to a complete standstill for a time; and when the gigantic upheaval had at length quieted down, a new art would have arisen, having little or no connection with that which had preceded it; whereas, in France, we find no break in continuity, but simply new tendencies; that is to say, new and reformed ideas of national life finding expression in the pictorial, plastic, and decorative arts, thereby showing not only phenomenal mobility of thought and action, but an extraordinary capacity for assimilating and expounding the entirely changed outlook on life. This intense originality, frequently applied in a misguided,

and occasionally in a vicious, direction, has stamped the eighteenth century in France as one of the great periods in the history of the world's art. One has but to contemplate the art of surrounding countries during this period to realise what an enormous influence was being exercised by France. Europe as a whole was following the lead the French were giving. Never were conditions so favourable for the full display of the powers of the Gallic temperament as during the eighteenth century. Luxury and refinement had almost reached their maximum development, and an exquisite spirit of gaiety had seized upon the upper classes. The simple life of the middle classes passed almost unnoticed when frivolity reigned supreme. Art was exclusively devoted to the rich; there was no other hope for it, no other outlet for its products. The great redeeming feature lay in the facts that the innate taste of the directors of fashion was of the highest order, and that the artists were endowed with a capacity for treating these excrescences of worldly folly and licentiousness in a manner which has excited the wonder and admiration of succeeding generations.

If we sometimes have reason to object to some want of modesty in the work of such men as

Fragonard and Boucher, we should never lose sight of the conditions under which those works were produced. The wonder is that their lapses were so few.

Though one can never forget that side by side with this intense *joie de vivre* the most appalling misery existed, he who would enjoy French eighteenth-century art to the full must be content to accept at its own valuation the life of the time; he must regard the life of the boudoir and the salon as that alone which dominated France; he must forget the misery and the injustice existing beneath the surface, and only think of society, which alone inspired the artists of the period. It is the art of youth and gallantry, of good living and love, of wondrous taste in dress and environment.

The verve and vivacity of Fragonard's brush have never been excelled; and if the subject of some particular pictures of his leaves us with a regret that such consummate talent was not expended in a more worthy direction, the magic of the technique can never be forgotten.

Religious art found but little favour in France, and the works of the few men who ventured on that path had no profound or moving qualities.

Another fact which serves to show how essentially national was French painting at this time, is the injury done to a French picture by removing it from its original surroundings. It requires to be seen and studied in the setting for which it was intended. And this because the cabinetmakers and other craftsmen were as great artists as the painters, and were, moreover, working under the same impulses. The result was the most perfectly harmonious whole the world has ever seen. Tear one piece from its surroundings, and not only will the beauty of that piece itself be injured but the remainder loses its unity and completeness. From this it will be seen that French pictures are not in their proper place upon the walls of a gallery; and that when there they suffer from the lack of their proper surroundings, which accounts for the disparaging remarks one sometimes hears about French pictorial art.

No other nation has so consistently maintained a fine feeling for line; whence its undoubted supremacy in the decorative arts. The magical lines of a Caffieri or Cressent commode are a necessary corollary to a Boucher or a van Loo. They emanated from brains similarly constructed, whose one unconscious idea was the treatment of

line. The sense of colour is certainly not a strong point in the national temperament, but inborn good taste prevents the use of anything garish or unsuitable. Colour was made to accentuate beauty and line, and was never regarded as the sole object to be aimed at. In this way the French will be found to differ greatly from their Italian neighbours, and in a still greater degree from those on the southern side of the Pyrenees. The marvellous combination of colour and line found in the sixteenth-century pictures of Venice was not to be found in France. As time went on the Italians neglected purity of line more and more, and laid ever-increasing stress upon colour; Spanish artists, too, with the notable exceptions of Velazquez and Goya, took but little interest in line, and gave themselves up to the study of colour; but the French artist looked upon this as of secondary importance and devoted himself to line.

From these remarks it will be seen that we must not look to paint as being the medium in which the French have best expressed themselves; we have only to go back to the wonderful architecture and sculpture of the gothic period to discover their pre-eminence over every other European nation. The cathedrals of Chartres,

Rheims, Amiens, Beauvais, and Bourges show us the highest pinnacle to which it is possible to carry the laws of symmetry and proportion. When, with time, the demand for great churches had passed away we find them manifesting the same qualities in domestic architecture; the country houses of the Loire valley and innumerable others scattered over France are instances in point. Then during the next great epoch, the reign of Louis XIV, the mania for spacious rooms, and rooms elaborately decorated, afforded them an opportunity for demonstrating that the national characteristics had not been lost. It was but a step from this point to the boudoir, and thus continuity was maintained until after the Revolution, when art was directed into other channels: and it is curious that the French, ever fertile in invention, have evolved no enduring style since that of the empire.

From the sixteenth to the eighteenth century one style developed itself so naturally from its predecessor that there seemed to be no limit to the possibilities of the future. The break, however, came, and since the early days of the last century painting has almost entirely engrossed the attention of France, and that with results on which it has every reason to pride itself.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY PAINTERS OF FRANCE

It would have been impossible before the exhibition of French primitives held in Paris in 1904 to trace the history of the early days of painting in France; that exhibition came as a natural sequence to the exhibition of Flemish primitives held in Bruges a couple of years previously. Many of the pictures appeared in both collections, and long discussions took place among the critics as to their exact place of origin. In regard to some of them a good deal of heat was infused into the controversy, and there was an indulgence in a spirit of chauvinism which tended to obscure the real points at issue. Many difficult problems arose, of which a large percentage will probably never be solved. But every one must acknowledge that the exhibition served to show how neglected France had been by the historians of art, and to make it evident that the early French painters left a rich inheritance to those that came after them.

It was but natural that art workers of every kind should have been profoundly impressed and moved to emulation by the wonderful skill of the twelfth and thirteenth-century architects. These men, within the limits of a short period of years, had emancipated themselves from the dominating influence of romanesque, and had thrown themselves into the creation of those magnificent monuments, the outcome of their Christian faith, with which France is covered: but these triumphs of architecture would not have been possible of achievement if the sculptor had not kept pace with the architect. It is strange that painting should have lagged so far behind, but it is only in comparatively rare instances that we find it employed in churches; and even in those instances the lack of technical skill makes the remaining fragments of little more than archæological interest.

That draughtsmen of considerable ability existed we have proof in the "parement" of Narbonne. This interesting fourteenth-century work is a drawing upon white silk of various scenes from the Passion; and the vigour and character which the artist has infused into his work, the composition, balance, and tenderness of expression, leave nothing to be desired. It is

impossible that one man should have suddenly attained such excellence, and it would indeed be interesting to find the connecting links between this drawing and the frescoes upon the walls of some French churches. So far as painting is concerned we are close to the awakening; and the influence of the Flemings becomes apparent. The great masters of Bruges and Ghent, the two van Eycks, were working a revolution north of the Alps, and even in Italy itself were leaving their mark upon art. Many of their followers emigrated from their own country and found employment in France and Burgundy, where they imparted their principles to the natives, so that it is exceedingly difficult to differentiate between Flemish and French painting at this period, at any rate as far as the work of these men who had left Flanders is concerned. They naturally, too, came into contact with Italian influence, which by this time was pushing its way north. The styles met in the neighbourhood of Avignon, and in the few extant examples of the works of artists of this district at that period both may be seen struggling for supremacy. It was a difficult time for art in France. The country was torn asunder by war, and whenever a school of painting had been established in some centre

and showed signs of promise a disastrous invasion or some other political misfortune overtook the district, and all the good that had been accomplished was swept away.

And this unsettled state of the country was another reason for the absence of any characteristically French school. Never more than beginnings were possible; and these beginnings had always to be made by foreign artists, whence it follows that the principles and methods differed, depending on the circumstance of the instructor being Flemish or Italian, as the case might be.

It is curious that during this period of broken activity the miniaturists continued working with scarcely any interruption in natural development. The collections of illuminated manuscripts in the national library and elsewhere show a degree of excellence unsurpassed in Europe. There is but little evidence of the nationality of these men, and it is but fair to presume that a not inconsiderable number of them were French; but works are common in which Flemish influence predominates.

During the early years of the fifteenth century Burgundy began to play an important part in the artistic development of France. The Flemings, who had migrated there, encouraged by an

open-handed patronage on the part of its wealthy inhabitants, had carried with them the best traditions of their school; and with the constant influx of new blood Burgundy rapidly assumed an important position in the world of art. The much-discussed master of Flémalle must have been held in considerable esteem, and the merits of the few works which can confidently be assigned to him show that he was an artist of no ordinary capacity. In one of the panels, for instance, in the Prado gallery the technique, good as it is, is hardly as remarkable as the spirit of gloomy mysticism he has thrown into the entire composition. The influence of Siena was also at work, and it largely depended upon the place of residence of an artist as to which influence gained the upper hand with him.

Some time before, in the refined pictures of John Malouel, one of the earliest suggestions of the Sienese influence is to be seen. In the fine panel in the Troyes museum and in the impressive Pietà in the Louvre, we are confronted with the characteristic which we associate during the next century and a half with the chief specimens of French art—a strange mixture of naturalism and idealism. We feel at once that we are in the presence of a man

who, while seeking to abstract the best from the influences he saw working around him, possessed originality, and had the capacity to think for himself.

It is to this time that we must look for religious fervour in the pictorial art; religion was still the great moving factor in life, the doctrines of the Church were unchallenged, and in them artists sought inspiration. As time went on the French school was content to proceed upon more materialistic lines. Not that there is any absence of religious motives, but the lofty conception has departed, and an increasing joy in material things is observable. A parallel movement was apparent in every country of Europe. We still find men who, like Memlinc and Gerard David, could derive their sole source of inspiration from religion in spite of the wonderful naturalism of John van Eyck. The French have never produced fervent religious painters like those of most of the neighbouring nations, but they have certainly given to the world naturalistic painters of whom any nation might be proud.

## CHAPTER III

### THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE RENAISSANCE

The fifteenth century was a period of great activity in France. Painting received considerable impetus from many centres, all of which were working more or less independently of one another, and the identity of the men of this epoch, whose masterpieces we admire to-day, is no longer matter for conjecture or doubt.

First and perhaps foremost we have as a painter of extraordinary talents and achievements Jehan Fouquet. He was born at Tours, the city which has given to France so much that is noteworthy in the realms of art; the date of his birth is approximately given as 1415, that of his death as about 1480. He was celebrated both as a miniaturist and as a painter. In the former capacity he has left us a unique monument in the precious "Book of Hours," the greatest treasure of the Condé museum at Chantilly. This was done for Stephen Chevalier, the treasurer of France, who throughout the

career of Fouquet, as far as we know it, was his chief patron.

Fouquet came at an early age under the influence of the great Bruges masters, and upon the naturalistic side of their art he moulded his own style. Although the Italian renaissance was making itself felt throughout Europe, he does not seem to have been influenced by it in the least; in style and conception he can be claimed as one of the first of the purely French artists of whom we have any knowledge. Quite early in his career he attracted the attention of Charles VII, whose portrait he painted in 1444. The following year he was invited to Rome by the pope, Eugenius IV, to paint his portrait; the intense artistic activity he found around him in Italy did not, however, induce him to stay there for long. Possibly he found competition severe, and as a foreigner did not get the encouragement he had anticipated; but, whatever the cause may have been, within a few years he was back again in France. It was probably about 1452 that his connection with Stephen Chevalier began. The most important work Fouquet left us was the celebrated diptych of Melun, which was preserved in that city until 1775, when the shutters were separated.

That representing the Virgin and Child passed into the van Entborn collection, and from that to the Antwerp gallery. The companion, which depicts Stephen himself with his patron saint, was lost sight of for some time after its removal from Melun, but was eventually found at Munich at the beginning of last century. It became the property of the collector Brentano, who then possessed the famous Chantilly "Book of Hours." From the Brentano family the picture was purchased by the Berlin gallery in 1896.

The origin of this famous diptych is enveloped in a certain amount of mystery. It is believed to have been ordered by Stephen Chevalier, and practically conclusive evidence that this was so is furnished by the fact that the Chantilly "Book of Hours" contains an almost identical scene. When the work was at Melun it hung over the tomb of Stephen Chevalier and his wife, Catherine Budé, who died in 1452. It was at one time thought that the Virgin was a portrait of this lady. The history of the diptych, however, seems to confirm the legend that Agnes Sorel, mistress of Charles VII, had really served as the model. Chevalier had been much favoured by this lady, who made him her executor; in order to express his gratitude he had this

picture painted and hung over her tomb at Loches. Upon the accession of Louis XI the treasurer continued to be attached to the court, and as some difficulties arose with the new king in regard to Agnes's tomb, he had the painting removed. His wife Catherine died on August 24, 1454; and seven years after her death he took Fouquet's masterpiece to Melun and hung it over her tomb. Naturally, he no longer wished that the Virgin should be known as the portrait of Agnes Sorel; but the tradition has always stuck to the picture, and from a careful comparison with the authentic portraits of that beautiful lady there can be but little doubt about the matter. Both wings were formerly framed with a sumptuous border of blue velvet ornamented with enamels upon engraved gold, and was composed of various subjects alternated with the initials E (Etienne) and C (Catherine). In this border was the beautiful portrait of the artist, which is now one of the treasures of the Louvre; it is executed in enamel upon silver, and portrays Fouquet at the age of thirty-five.

Fouquet, in the religious works that have come down to us, shows remarkable powers of composition and ability to absorb the fervent spirit of his contemporaries. These qualities can be seen to the full at Chantilly, where the "Book of

Hours" is so exhibited that one can easily make a complete examination. Throughout the whole range of subjects the curious mixture of gothic and renaissance art is apparent. He was as yet undecided as to whether to pursue the principles he had received from van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, or to carry forward those of the Italian renaissance, which by this time had impressed themselves upon the greater part of artistic Europe. It is this curious mingling of styles that causes the work of Fouquet to lack the fervour of his predecessors, and this in spite of their wonderful technique. An instance in point is the Virgin and Child, surrounded by the heavenly choir, receiving the homage of Stephen Chevalier and his patron saint. The Madonna is seated upon a throne under an arch of ornate gothic workmanship: she is conceived quite in the manner of John van Eyck, and the angels have been founded upon those of Memlinc; but the recess behind and the architecture of the background are quite renaissance in character. These are rather the faults of the age he lived in than of Fouquet himself. He was in no sense a plagiarist; his originality is manifest to all who have studied his works, and he is undoubtedly to be accounted as one of the most masterly painters France produced during

the fifteenth century in technical capability and virile treatment of portraiture.

Farther south than Tours the artistic movement was making strides. Avignon became a centre of great importance, and in spite of what has been achieved of late years in the matter of tracing the output of the school, much remains to be accomplished. Here Flemish influence struggled valiantly with Italian, and a curious and very charming mixture was the result. Its characteristics are an alluring sweetness and repose, combined with considerable freedom in handling.

Several eminent painters have left works which enable us to see to what extent art flourished in Avignon. Foremost amongst them was Enguerrand Charonton, whose masterpiece is still in the hospital at Villeneuve-les-Avignon. The authorship of this fine work was for long a matter of dispute. At one time and another it was held to be the work of King René, John van Eyck, and van der Meire. All doubt upon the subject was set at rest, however, by the Abbé Requin of Avignon, who found the original agreement for the picture, dated 1453, and made between Enguerrand Charonton and an ecclesiastic named John de Montagnac. Minute details as to the composition and the method of treatment

were set out, serving to show that the early painters were frequently compelled to restrain their own impulses, and to produce exactly what was demanded of them. Charonton, however, produced one of the historic works of the French school. The "Triumph of the Virgin" is essentially a French production, and its extraordinary qualities show how undeservedly the school had been overlooked until quite recently by the historians of art. Charonton was born about 1410, and at Laon, as is shown by the contract for the "Triumph of the Virgin," in which he is described as a native of that city. In 1447 he began to work at Avignon, and appears to have found abundant employment; he is known to have been comfortably established and married, and to have been there still in 1461. A curious connection between Fouquet and Charonton can be traced in their method of treating a cherub; in both the Antwerp Madonna of the former and the Villeneuve-les-Avignon picture they are red Charonton appears to have carried out his agreement for the painting of this picture fairly faithfully. In a few details he has deviated from the actual letter of the contract, but these few alterations were, no doubt, decided upon after consulting his patron. Even in the dismal and

unworthy surroundings in which the work is at present seen, it makes a profound impression upon the beholder. It contains some fifty figures, without counting the angels, the righteous, and the damned, who would bring the total up to over a hundred. The donor, John de Montagnac, is shown at the foot of the cross with a mitre upon his head. In front of him is the head of the charterhouse of Villeneuve kneeling before the cross, and on each side a great crowd of people—popes, kings, princes, and monks. In the centre of the composition is the Virgin, a girl of great beauty—a portrait, it is conjectured, of Charonton's wife. This monumental work is carried out in distemper upon a gold ground prepared on canvas and plaster.

Another great master of the period was Nicolas Froment, the painter of the fine altar-piece in the cathedral of Aix. Unfortunately we know even less of his life than we do of that of Charonton. That the two were known to each other is suggested by the fact that they used the same models in their pictures.

The Aix altar-piece was also considered in times gone by as having a Flemish origin, and has even been given to van Eyck; but documents, discovered some years ago by Monsieur Blancard

in the archives of the department of Bouches-du-Rhône, show it to have been ordered by King René for the cathedral. The important diptych in the Louvre, which portrays the king and his wife, Joan of Laval, can also, with comparative certainty, be attributed to Froment.

We now approach a series of works of great importance in the history of French art, but of more doubtful origin. These are the remarkable productions ascribed, for want of a more definite attribution, to the master of Moulins, so called from the fact that he painted the tender and fascinating triptych in the cathedral of that place. Many conjectures have been thrown out as to his identity. A number of French critics have wished to see in him the famous artist Jehan Perréal, who, as we know from documentary evidence, collaborated with Michel Colombe on the celebrated tomb in the cathedral of Nantes. At present nothing certain is known, and it is indeed curious that this can be said of a master of such wide celebrity that the Gonzagas wished to possess a portrait from his hand—an artist, too, who was held in high esteem by three kings of France. This tantalising knot remains to be unravelled, but it will not prevent us from admiring the beauty of his work. We can be

fairly certain that some half-dozen paintings are from his hand. In sentiment and suavity of treatment he occupies the same place in the French school that Memlinc does in that of Flanders. The Moulins altar-piece is of such high quality, both as regards conception and execution, that it was long considered to be the work of Dominic Ghirlandaio. Some writers have endeavoured to connect the master of Moulins with John Bourdichon, of whom we know at least one authentic work, the "Book of Hours" of Anne of Brittany, now in the national library in Paris. There is perhaps as much to be said in favour of this hypothesis as in ascribing these five works to Perréal; it is, however, to be hoped that the future will bring some document to light which will disclose his identity.

# CHAPTER IV

## THE CLOUETS

In the preceding chapter a short outline has been given of the early French painters and of the principal centres in which they worked; Avignon and Tours stand out prominently, but they were not the only centres. In recent years pictures have been brought to light which, from documentary or other evidence, can be assigned with a fair degree of certainty to other districts. Thus we know that a number of painters were established in the east of France, others at Amiens and at Paris, to say nothing of the school of Provence, which was entirely under the influence of Avignon, or of that of Orleans to which the inspiration came from Tours. During the greater part of the fifteenth century religious art held the foremost place, and the study of the well-authenticated examples, of which a short account has been given, will serve to show to what a degree of excellence the French had attained in this important branch. The Flemish influence which

had been so largely instrumental in moulding it was gradually replaced by a warmer one from the south. The austere and refined principles of the school of van Eyck, when once they were thoroughly assimilated by the French, bore fruit essentially French in character. There is no longer any doubt in paintings of the end of the fifteenth century as to whether these works are French or Flemish, and consequently we can definitely state that the creation of the French school dates from this time. True, it received recruits from Flanders from time to time, but whilst several eminent painters were among them, they were not indispensable in the carrying forward of the movement.

As time advanced portrait painting began to play an important part to the detriment of religious art; for in the early years of the fifteenth century the portrait became a diplomatic instrument. It has been remarked that many of the important treaties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were treaties of marriage; the almost incessant state of war which prevailed in Europe was varied by treaties of peace, and usually one of the essential conditions was the giving in marriage of some lady. In order to see what the lady was like a portrait painter was despatched to make a record of her features, in order that the prospective bride-

groom might decide as to whether he wished to proceed with the bargain or not—we find, for example, in our own country Holbein so employed by Henry VIII. In this way the portrait painter became an indispensable adjunct of the court; and as princes followed the fashion set by kings, portrait painters were kept busy. Perréal and Bourdichon were both portrait painters to the king, and it can hardly be doubted that there are portraits by them existing to-day which have not been identified. The painters of the sixteenth century, although frequently held in high esteem by reason of their talents, were still looked upon as craftsmen; few of them aspired to be more than excellent workmen, and from this modesty proceeds the ardent sincerity of their work. Some were valets to their masters, in addition being their portrait painters, and were paid a fixed wage which covered all their duties. But there were a certain number of painters who held high places in the court, and, in consequence, were better paid. Under Louis XII the first rank was accorded to Bourdichon and Perréal, in addition to whom he had in his employ amongst others Nicholas Belin of Modena, Bartholomew Guéty, who was called Guyot, and Jehan Clouet.

Clouet was destined to play an important rôle

in French art. Under Louis XII his merits do not seem to have attracted much attention, for we find Bourdichon and Perréal receiving 240 livres as their annual wage, whilst he had only 160. The origin of Clouet is still unknown. It is probable from a study of his works that he was a Fleming. But it must not be forgotten that but a few years since Fouquet was also believed to be a Fleming, and treated as a direct disciple of van Eyck. We know that Clouet was in the service of Francis I in 1516 from a document relating to the king's household now in the national library. After the death of Bourdichon in 1521 his name was changed from Jamet to Jehannet, and he held with Perréal the first place among the portrait painters to the king, his salary being at the same time raised to 240 livres. After 1525 he held the first place to the prejudice of Perréal himself. Soon after this the name of a new-comer, Petit-Jean Champion, is found in the king's accounts, but to-day no trace of his works is to be discovered. He was evidently a painter of considerable repute or he would never have been so prominently mentioned. After 1528 Perréal disappeared, and Jehannet and Champion were left alone; and some five years later an interesting change occurred, which serves to show how the

relative merits of the two painters were regarded. Champion was made "valet de garde-robe" at a salary of 200 livres, and his colleague was appointed painter and "valet de chambre." This was the first recognition of the superiority of Clouet. It is curious that he should disappear from the records as mysteriously as he had come into them; but as in 1540 his son Francis is mentioned as receiving the same wages and privileges as his father, it is more than probable the latter was then dead.

The work of the elder Clouet has only within the past few years been recovered from the oblivion into which it had fallen. By far the greater part of his works, together with those of his pupils and his son, have been assigned to the hand of the younger Holbein. One or two were exhibited as such at the Tudor exhibition held some years ago in London, but since that time the work of re-arrangement has been steadily proceeding. In some ways, indeed, this has been carried to extreme, one might not unreasonably say to absurd, lengths; one critic has even gone so far as to claim the so-called ambassadors by Holbein in the National gallery for the younger Clouet.

To settle the works of Jehan Clouet is an

exceedingly difficult problem, for one knows so little that can with any degree of certainty be given to him. A document of the utmost importance in this respect is the wonderful collection of three hundred drawings to-day housed at Chantilly. These were purchased *en bloc* by the late duke of Aumale from the earl of Carlisle in 1889. Now, curiously enough, unlike the Holbein drawings at Windsor, these portraits do not always bear the names of the personages represented, and it is only by comparison with known and well-authenticated portraits of the period that some of them have been identified. In this way the late Henry Bouchot rendered great service; for he succeeded in affixing names to a not inconsiderable number. The series covers the period from about 1515 to 1570, and it is thus quite fair to presume that many of the earlier specimens are the work of Jehan Clouet. They are generally masterly in treatment, and quite worthy of such a master as Clouet is reputed to have been.

But even when a portrait is on technical or historical grounds fairly confidently given to him, there is the ever-haunting recollection of the existence of Guéty, Perréal, Bourdichon, and Champion to trouble one.

Much of the obscurity which envelops the life and work of the elder Clouet does not exist in relation to his son Francis. He was born at Tours before 1522, his mother being Joan Boucault. That he had achieved a considerable reputation is conclusively proved by the fact that he was appointed to succeed his father, whom he had assisted for some years before his death, and from whom he had doubtless received his artistic education. Conclusive proof is furnished in the king's letters appointing Francis to his father's office of the foreign origin of the Clouets. When a foreigner died his goods were confiscated to the crown, but the king held his painter in such esteem that he permitted the son to become possessed of his father's effects; and in the same letter not only eulogised Jehan Clouet's productions, but added that Francis had followed creditably in his footsteps, and expressed a hope that in appointing him he would proceed from good to better. This was the praise of a king who was an enthusiastic patron of art, and who did everything he could to advance its progress in his kingdom; a king whose reign was one of the most important periods in the history of French art. The tastes of the ruler were reflected through-

out his dominions, and under his wise guidance a great impetus was given to artistic activity in every direction.

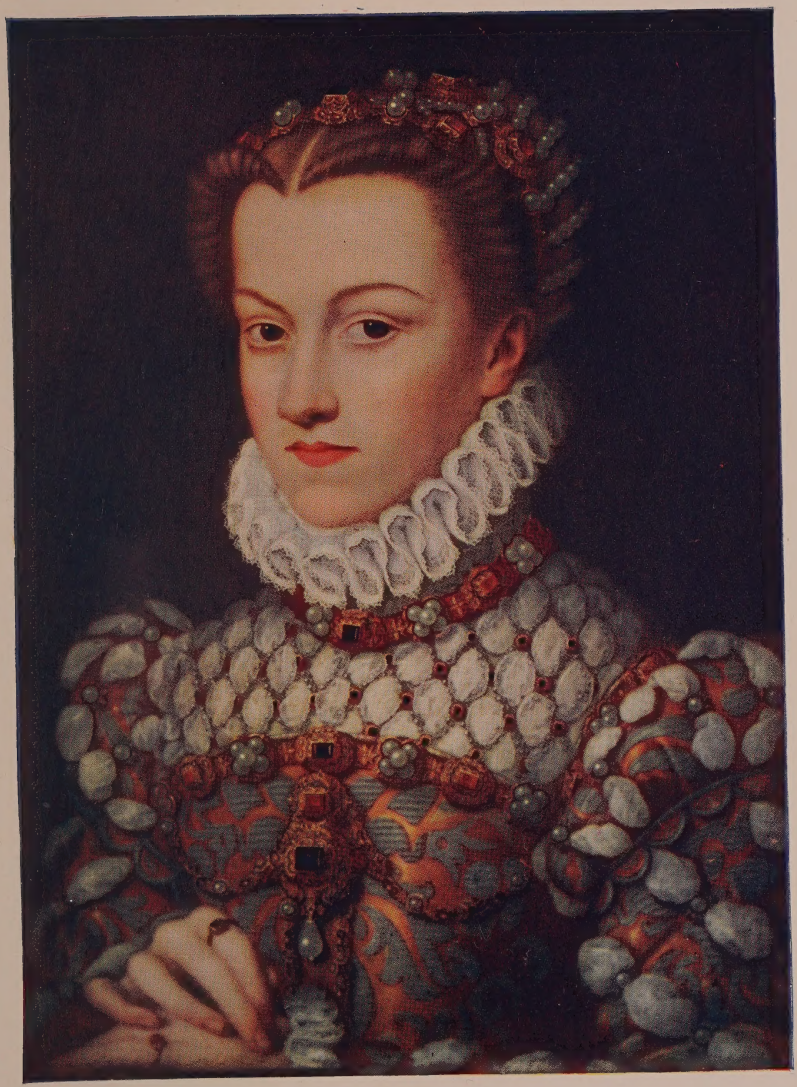
Clouet remained the only painter in the service of the king until 1546, when the celebrated enameller of Limoges, Leonard Limousin, was appointed his colleague at a salary of 120 livres per annum. This renowned master worked upon much the same lines as Clouet and the other great master of the period, Corneille de Lyon, by whom beyond doubt he was greatly influenced. This influence can be traced in his large portraits in enamel, which are conceived in the same spirit as theirs.

Upon the death of Francis I Clouet entered the service of his successor, Henry II, upon the same conditions as he had previously enjoyed, and an assistant was appointed named William Boutelou, a native of Blois. Clouet maintained his popularity, and additional offices were from time to time bestowed upon him. In 1551 the superintendence of the Châtelet was made over to him, and eight years later the important post of controller-general of the mint fell to his lot. In this high position he was the predecessor of the sculptor Germain Pilon. In the same year, in the presence of the parish

priest of Saint Merry, he made a will which reveals several interesting details of his life. It shows that he could by this time be accounted fairly wealthy; that he lived in his own house in the Rue Sainte Avoye; and that he had never been married, but had two illegitimate daughters, Diana and Lucretia, for whom he provided comfortably. To his sister, Catherine, who had married Abel Foulon, he bequeathed 600 livres. Catherine had a son, Benjamin, who followed in the footsteps of his uncle; and his work may perhaps prove to be an important factor in determining what should finally be assigned to Francis himself. Mr Bouchot conjectures that in all probability the studies of Clouet and all his drawings fell into Foulon's hands after his death, and that the younger man continued to work as nearly as possible in the same style, and that consequently, with the lapse of time, these productions by the nephew became confused with those of his uncle. This hypothesis would tend to solve the inequality shown in different works ascribed to Francis Clouet. The theory is substantially corroborated by the examination of a series of drawings purchased for the national library in Paris in 1825. Although they all have the

appearance of having been executed at the same time, two distinct hands are observable. On the one hand there is a series of portraits of celebrated persons, dating from 1560 to 1567, quite worthy to be ranked with the best we know of Clouet; on the other a number of drawings of inferior quality, and one of these happens to be signed "Fulonius fecit." Mr Bouchot was, doubtless, quite right in assuming that this is in reality none other than Benjamin Foulon. If any further evidence is needed that the earlier specimens are by Francis Clouet, it is to be found in the fact that many have the names of the originals beneath them, and, in addition, details of events which happened long after Francis was dead. These could not have been drawn by Foulon; but upon their falling into his hands he added the names and also the notes of interesting events.

The method of both Clouets, of Corneille de Lyon, and probably of most of the contemporary portrait painters, appears to have been similar. They made sketches of notable persons of whom they might be called upon from time to time to make portraits, and from these memoranda they were able to make as many portraits as might be desired without requiring any more sittings.



PORTRAIT OF ELIZABETH OF AUSTRIA
*(By François Clouet. The Louvre)*

Thus, for many of the pictures and miniatures which can with a tolerable degree of certainty be attributed to them, drawings exist. Rarely indeed did they paint a portrait in oil from life, and in the few specimens in which we can assume that they did so the result is not nearly so satisfactory from the artistic standpoint. Few life-size portraits by Francis Clouet exist, the principal one being the full-length portrait of Charles IX in the Vienna gallery; but quite recently another important and signed example, the portrait of Peter Quethe, has been added to the Louvre. The master was not, however, nearly so happy in pictures of large dimensions as he was in smaller ones; the attractive Elizabeth of Austria, for instance, in the Louvre is not so satisfactory from a purely artistic standpoint as many of his smaller works. That, as a miniaturist, he ranks high in the French school, the well-known miniature of Charles IX in the imperial treasury at Vienna, for which a superb drawing exists in the national library in Paris, and the portrait of Mary Stuart at Windsor are quite sufficient evidence.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FOLLOWERS OF THE CLOUETS

It is inconceivable that the success of such men as the two Clouets should not have stimulated other painters to emulation; but it is practically impossible after this lapse of time to identify any considerable number of their followers, and consequently the greater part of the portraits of that period must forever remain anonymous. Even could a list of the painters be made, it would be more than difficult to assign any particular work to any individual.

It is more than probable that we should not have any record of the works of one of the greatest of the painters of that period, Corneille de Lyon, had it not been for the enthusiastic labours of an enlightened collector, Roger de Gaignières, a remarkable man, who devoted a considerable portion of his life to collecting the small portraits of Corneille at Lyons, where at that time these wonderful little pictures were to be found in considerable numbers. He pur-

chased all he could lay his hands upon, and letters of his are still extant, written to friends, in which he shows how delighted he always was whenever he had succeeded in making a new acquisition. The collection he had thus laboriously brought together passed into the possession of Louis XIV in or about the year 1711. The people who should have been the foremost to preserve these priceless documents, which were all important to the French nation, proved to be those who had the least appreciation of them. A sale by auction was made in 1717, de Troy, the painter, acting as expert, and the collection was scattered to the winds. Fortunately, before the auction commenced the marquis of Torcy, who was officially in charge of the sale, placed his seal on the panels, and as in many cases it has been preserved intact, this has been a means of identification.

The details of the life of Corneille de Lyon are exceedingly vague. For long he remained a mere name in history, and, with the exception of Roger de Gaignières, nobody until comparatively recently attempted to disentangle his works from those of a large number of other painters of the sixteenth century. Historians contented themselves with the passage

in which Brantôme relates that Queen Catherine, upon her second visit to Lyons in 1564, was astonished to see in Corneille's house portraits of a large number of the ladies and gentlemen who had accompanied her upon her former visit in 1548; she was not only much amused by the old-fashioned appearance of the costume, but recognised its fidelity, and to this she called the attention of the duke of Nemours, who had accompanied her in 1548. This (with the exception of a mention here and there of his name in the poetry of the period, serving to show that he was highly esteemed) is one of the few facts in his history that has come down to us; there are, however, a few notices of him in the archives of Lyons. In one document the king decrees that Corneille may take possession of all the goods and property of the deceased Peter Breysan, called Bougarras; in another, dated 1540, he was named painter to the dauphin; in 1549 he was freed from the payment of the tax on wine; and in 1551 he was made painter to the king.

There seems to be no doubt that he was of Dutch origin; indeed he was called Corneille de la Haye, and was granted letters of naturalisation in 1547. He must have been born about 1500,

for he painted a portrait of the count of Angoulême, who died in 1536. He was certainly married before 1547, and had a son and a daughter, both of whom followed his own profession. He seems to have died in 1575. Such is the extent of our knowledge of one of the greatest painters of France in the sixteenth century.

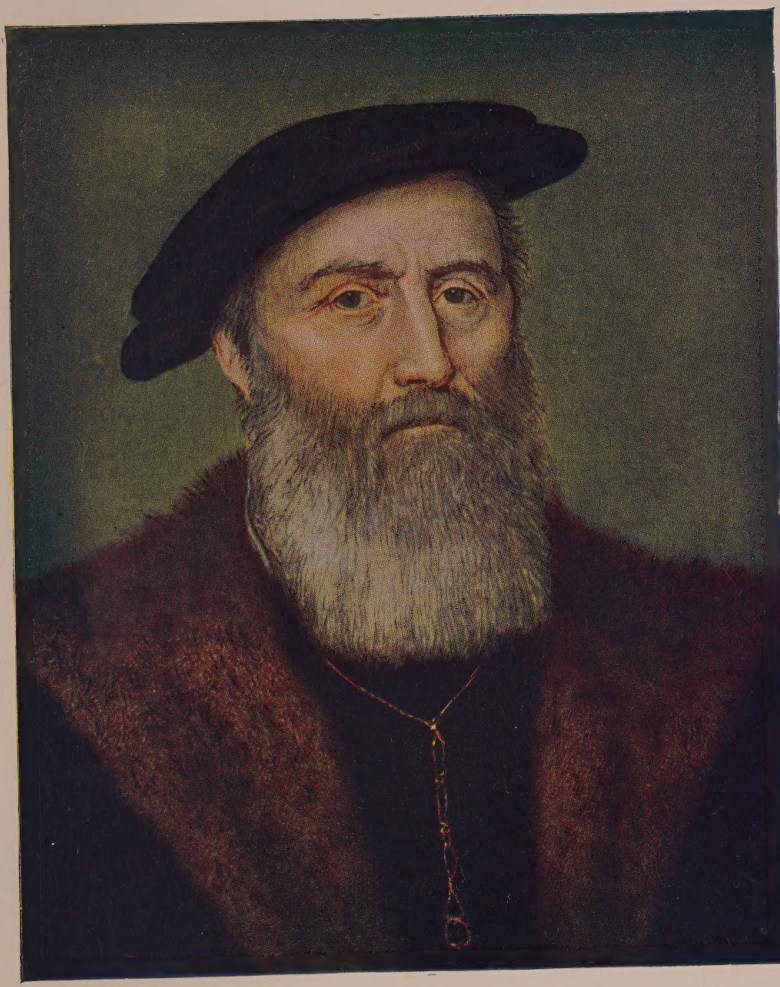
The most extensive collections of his works are to be found at Versailles and Chantilly. His paintings are nearly always of small dimensions, in fact almost miniatures; they are executed with wonderful delicacy, and with a very free and delicate handling. The grounds are of a beautiful green tone, which sets off the portraits to perfection; and the details are exquisitely wrought, particularly those of rich vestments and of articles of jewellery.

What has been said is, however, only true of the finest works attributed to him. There are a large number of panels which fall far below this standard, and it is not improbable that his son and daughter are responsible for their production. It must always be remembered that his method was of so delicate a character that any drastic cleaning means ruin; and as unfortunately a not inconsiderable number of his works have fallen into the hands of clumsy and incompetent

restorers it is quite impossible to form a just idea of their original state.

In the very few which remain in their pristine condition Corneille de Lyon shows himself to be every whit as great a master as either of the Clouets. His heads are masterly in treatment, the expression of the eyes and mouth being admirably caught; and he possessed in an eminent degree the ability to render his means subservient to the end. There is no evidence of labour or effort, there are no superfluities in his art; all is directness and concentration. In grasp of character he was a master of the first rank, and not infrequently, in this respect, closely approaches Holbein.

There are two portraits in the Condé museum at Chantilly which, taken together, make clear the superiority of Corneille de Lyon over the numerous painters working under his influence. One, the supposed portrait of Gabrielle de Rochechouart, wife of Martigné Briant, is full of vitality. The beautiful blue eyes are of alluring charm, and the well-moulded mouth, half breaking into a smile, lends an additional fascination to a face full of kindness and sympathy; and the accessories of her dress are wrought with the skill of a miniaturist. The lines throughout this



PORTRAIT OF THE DUC DE GUISE
(*By Corneille de Lyon*)

fine portrait are extremely graceful and pleasing, and there is hardly any faultiness in the drawing. In the other, the formerly unnamed portrait of Claude of Valois, duchess of Lorraine, there is an entire absence of those fine qualities we find in the work of Corneille de Lyon. Certainly the panel has not been too tenderly handled by time and the restorers, but it can never have been of sufficient quality to allow it to be ascribed to Corneille himself. The hard lines of the dress, the immobile features and rigid hair proclaim it the work of a person of far inferior capacity. There are a number of portraits distributed throughout the collections of Europe and America, in which similar faults are to be observed, and it is highly probable that they will finally be attributed to the children of Corneille rather than, as at present, to the master himself.

The name of the artist William Boutelou has been known to the world of art since Laborde published his learned *Comptes des Bâtiments;* he was a man who, in his day, played an important rôle. He was working under Francis Clouet for twenty-five years, that is from 1547 to 1572. The first mention of him discovered up to the present relates to the year 1536, when he was

painter to the dauphin, Francis of Angoulême, and received 120 livres yearly as wages. Why this appointment came to an end, whether it was that his work did not please his master, or for some other cause, is not clear. He was content to work for 70 livres at the court; but there were certain extras for which he received supplementary pay, which no doubt considerably increased his emoluments. It was he, for instance, who executed some of the stucco at Fontainebleau when Primaticcio and Rosso were engaged at the palace. Upon his return to the palace he was principally engaged in miniature painting, but at the same time was evidently called upon to perform a variety of tasks—as, for example, in 1556, when the queen commissioned him to design the costumes for a tragedy which was to be played at the court. But the date in his life which concerns us most is the year 1560; he then drew the portrait of the fool Thonyn, who formerly had been in the employ of the Constable Montmorency. He received 23 livres for this drawing, which, by an extraordinary piece of good fortune, has found its way to Chantilly in the collection which came from Castle Howard. The quality of the work shows that Boutelou was an accomplished artist; and if his oil-paint-

ings were as good as his drawings there can be but little doubt that to-day they are hopelessly mixed with those of Clouet.

The records make mention of numerous other painters of this time, many of whom were held in high esteem. But the confusion which still exists makes dogmatic attributions a matter of extreme difficulty. There are certain paintings and drawings of which I have already spoken, which, on documentary evidence, can with certainty be given to particular men, and the authorship of others can be arrived at with a fair degree of probability; but as regards the vast bulk it will be safer to wait until our knowledge is less fragmentary. The advance in knowledge which has been made of recent years has been largely due to the untiring efforts of Messieurs Henry Bouchot, Dimier, George Hulin, Natalis Rondot, and Moreau-Nélaton, and there is reason for hoping that the foundation they have laid will be productive of great results in the near future.

# CHAPTER VI

## LE NAIN AND NICHOLAS POUSSIN

We now enter upon a period of French art in which facts are abundant, and in consequence less is left to conjecture—the period when French art was no longer so intimately connected with the court as it had previously been. Instead of engaging themselves to the king or some prince for a yearly sum, painters became independent, accepting commissions whenever they could get them, and when they could not, producing other works which they sold as best they might. This system was naturally more conducive to originality; a man was free to work according to his own dictates, and was not in the ordinary course called upon to do anything distasteful to himself. Present-day fashion has set itself against the art of this period, which remains, however, one of the most intellectual and interesting epochs.

The eyes of painters of every nationality were then fixed on Italy, the land of glorious achievement and creative impulse, for the fame of the

*Le Nain* *Photo Moreau*

PORTRAIT GROUP

*(Louvre)*

great Italian masters had spread all over Europe, and it became the great ambition of all young painters to go to Rome.

Before, however, speaking of those men who did so, it will be better to give what particulars have been preserved to us of the history of the three brothers Le Nain, who occupy such an important place in French art. It is not easy to differentiate between their works, and they are generally grouped together under one heading. They appear to have been natives of Laon; the eldest was Anthony, who was called the Chevalier, next came Louis, known as the Roman, and then Matthew. The dates of their birth is not known, but it is thought that Anthony was born about 1588; he died in Paris in 1648. Louis is believed to have been born in 1593; he too died in Paris and in the same year as his brother. Matthew, who is thought to have been born in 1600, died in Paris in 1677. All three were amongst the founders of the Academy in 1648. The splendid series of paintings in the Louvre show them to have been accomplished artists, and it seems curious that so little is known of their history. They generally painted scenes from peasant life, and in their choice of subject and their method of treating it, their pictures have more affinity with the Dutch

and Flemish schools than anything else found in France at this period. In their best pictures they reveal a directness of handling, a feeling for Nature and a grasp of character to a degree which places them high in the scale of painters of this class. There is a remarkable inequality in their colouring; sometimes it is clear and transparent, coupled with a keen sense of value and appropriateness, whilst in other examples there is shown a tendency to become hot and dry. This, coupled, as it occasionally is, with straggling composition, leads one to think that one of the brothers was superior to the others, and that the best are from his hand. Whether this presumption is correct or not, they stand with Chardin as the greatest delineators of peasant life France has produced.

We must now leave the men who were content to portray the materialistic and commonplace side of life, and approach those who went in pursuit of idealism and caught inspiration from classical sources.

Nicholas Poussin was born at Villiers, a village close to Les Andelys in Normandy, in June 1594. He was descended from a noble family originating from Soissons. His first instructor was a painter of small repute, Quintin Varin of Les Andelys; and it is quite probable that young Poussin

soon came to the conclusion that he could not derive much benefit from his tutor. So at the age of eighteen he determined to try his fortunes in Paris. Here he was at once captivated by the antique, and spent his time copying such original specimens as he could find, and making himself acquainted with those outside his reach by means of casts. He also devoted much attention to those Italian masters who had formed themselves upon the antique. A young artist who had become imbued with such a passion for the antique could not for long be content with Paris ; his eyes were set on Rome, and he appears to have spared no efforts to obtain the ambition of his life. After prolonged struggle and hardship, he at length reached the Eternal City in 1624, and there he met with a kindred spirit in the person of the sculptor du Quesnoy. Both were delighted with the new surroundings, in the midst of which they zealously pursued their studies. Poussin seems to have practised modelling, and to improve his painting he frequented the school of Domenichino, for whom he had the highest regard. The Bolognese master was then at the height of his fame, and it is doubtful whether any influence could at that moment have proved more beneficial to the young Frenchman. The correct but some-

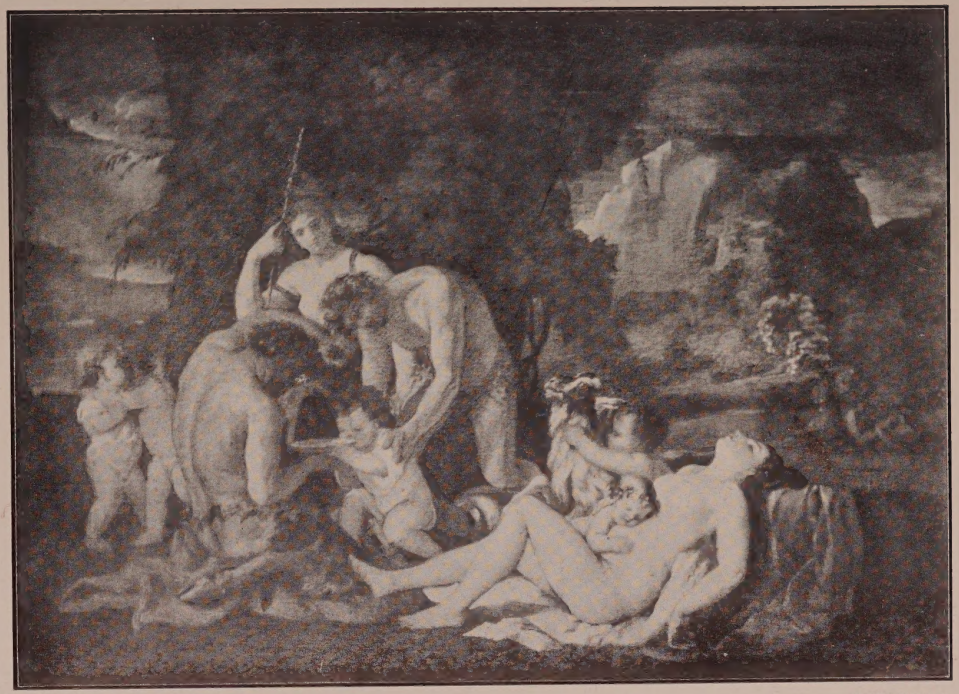
what dry and soulless style of the Italian master was calculated to develop the technical capabilities of his pupils to the utmost, for the imperative importance of drawing would be rigidly insisted upon, and there would be no giving of a free rein to idealism. This method was not peculiar to the school of Domenichino, but was pretty generally pursued in Italy during the early years of the seventeenth century, and would of itself be sufficient to account for the monotonous procession of well-painted but empty pictures dating from this time. It was the best possible training which could fall to the lot of a young painter of slowly maturing intellect like Poussin; it gave him a thorough grounding in those technical qualities which were to stand him in such good stead in after life. We are not told how he managed to gain a livelihood during these early years of study: there is no doubt that he felt the pinch of poverty, but his enthusiasm carried him through. His first good friend was Cardinal Barberini, to whom he had been introduced by the poet Marino, just before the cardinal left Rome on diplomatic missions to France and Spain. Upon his return he took a great interest in the young painter, and commissioned him to paint two pictures—"The Death of Germanicus" and "The Capture of

Jerusalem." Such subjects were doubtless to Poussin's taste; the cardinal certainly was pleased with the paintings. The fame of these works spread and soon brought him fresh commissions. With every succeeding picture his reputation increased, and he was recognised as a master. Some, indeed, of the subjects he painted were so well received that he was called upon to make replicas. The favour he now enjoyed, far from spoiling him, served as an incentive to fresh efforts, and he steadily improved; his knowledge was very wide, and his opinion was eagerly sought upon all subjects appertaining to art.

As years rolled on he became desirous of again seeing his native country, and accordingly, in 1640, he set out for Paris in the company of one of his best patrons, M. de Chantelon. It is more than probable that Chantelon, who lived in the French capital, was desirous of having Poussin near him. The painter's fame had preceded him, and he was warmly received by Cardinal Richelieu, who presented him to the king. The latter was much impressed by the artist, and insisted upon his becoming his painter in ordinary at a salary of 120 livres per annum in addition to apartments, which were to be allotted to him in the Tuileries. Poussin was unaccustomed to restraint of any kind,

he had lived his own life in Rome unhampered by the petty ceremonial of a court, and it can easily be imagined that he found the new condition of things hard to bear. He was far removed too from that which had absorbed his life. On the excuse of wishing to bring his wife to Paris he left for Rome, with the king's permission, two years later. The king died before he could return, and Poussin considered himself freed from any obligation to do so, and accordingly stayed in Rome for the remainder of his life. He died on the 19th of November 1665 at the age of seventy-two, and was buried in the church of St Laurence *in Lucina.*

Nicholas Poussin was undoubtedly one of the greatest masters of painting France has ever produced. His work is the embodiment of profound learning and scientific workmanship. In spite of his mind being saturated with classical principles he rarely allowed his classicism to be so dominant as to obliterate his originality. In his early canvases this rigid training manifests itself in the spirit of restraint, which is to be observed throughout the composition. There is evidence of a temperament held in check, but at the same time the fire of genius is strikingly apparent. Nevertheless



*Nicolas Poussin* *Photo. Moreau*

BACCHANALE

(*Louvre*)

Poussin was an unequal painter. Occasionally the subjects he chose were uninteresting, and the method of treating them dry; but even in these the knowledge displayed must compel attention. It is in his bacchanals that we find the master at his best; in the celebrated dance in the National gallery there is a verve and a sense of motion few masters can rival; and though it is a scene of debauchery there is no vulgarity, no undue coarseness. To study Poussin at his best one must go to the Louvre; the fine series of pictures there exhibited shows the master in every phase. His seriousness and depth do not generally appeal to the popular taste—he is a painter for the few; but he exercised a profound influence upon the French school. One need but mention Simon Vouet, Sebastian Bourdon, and Le Brun as instances of painters who owed much to his example.

## CHAPTER VII

### GASPARD POUSSIN AND CLAUDE LORRAINE

BEFORE the coming of Nicholas Poussin landscape painting hardly existed in France. The glimpses of distant country and towns seen in the pictures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are frequently wonderfully faithful to Nature; but they take a subordinate place. There was, indeed, no attempt made to treat this branch of art as a serious study to be carried out for its own sake. Poussin brought about a great change in this respect, but in the domain of landscape painting he was not the harbinger of such a revolution as was Rubens when he painted "The Rainbow," a colossal work whose influence was widespread. However, by his sober and dignified pictures he showed his countrymen the possibilities open to them in this direction. It is true that they show the same classical spirit that is to be found in his subject pictures—the trees, for example, are somewhat monotonous and lack motion, but there is a loftiness of pur-

pose, together with a sense of air and breadth of handling, that proclaims him a great landscape painter.

His influence was, however, chiefly indirect through his brother-in-law, Gaspard Dughet, better known, because of his relationship to Nicholas, as Gaspard Poussin. Gaspard was born of French parents in Rome in 1613, and would thus be quite young when Nicholas arrived. He was fortunate enough to have Poussin for his master; and from the first his master appreciated his merits and encouraged him in every possible way. Perceiving his bent for landscape painting he advised him to devote his attention as much as possible to this branch, but at the same time to strive to attain perfection in figures. If this counsel had been appreciated by many later landscape painters we should have fewer fine landscapes marred by the painter's incapacity to draw his figures properly.

Gaspard had not to struggle for recognition as Nicholas had done; with the latter occupying a prominent position, surrounded by numerous patrons, the young man found the ground ready prepared for him. Not that his merits were not in keeping with his opportunities. He was scarcely out of his teens when he was recognised

as a master, and commissions flowed in upon him. He began to travel a good deal about Italy, but preferred Rome as a place of residence, probably because it was there that he found his best patrons.

Gaspard worked in several mediums, in all of which he achieved equal excellence. While fully recognising undoubted qualities in the works he executed for churches and palaces, it is rather to his easel pictures that we must look for the chief evidence of his talent. His works, which vary greatly in quality, are very numerous, and it is to be regretted that large numbers of them have become very dark owing to the injudicious use of a sombre red ground. He treated Nature in an idealistic manner, and his compositions are often very noble. His skies are of the glorious blue of Italy, with masses of majestic white clouds floating before the wind. The landscape is usually enveloped in warm, sunny atmosphere, suffusing the distant hills and villages with a wonderful glow. The trees are still academic, and present many monotonous features, as is the case with the works of nearly all the painters of his time. Gaspard Poussin died in Rome in 1675.

We now approach one of the most renowned names in landscape painting of all time, Claude

Gellée, known as Claude Lorraine, who was born at Chamagne in the Vosges in the year 1600. The early days of Claude gave no indication of his future greatness, for he was a backward boy, even finding a difficulty in learning to read and write. His parents were in humble circumstances, and were consequently unable to afford him much assistance in making a start in life, but a situation in the service of a cook was found for him. There are few parts of France, even to this day, where the art of cooking has been so thoroughly mastered as in the eastern districts: this reputation is of old date, and many a wealthy person, desirous of engaging a cook, has looked for one in this region. Claude appears to have prospered in his business, and as time went on, having thoroughly mastered it, he thought he might make an attempt to better his position, influenced no doubt by what he had seen done by some of his companions. A party of cooks determined to try their fortune in Rome, and Claude made one of the party. There he soon found the situation he sought with a painter, Augustine Tassi, and, once engaged, attracted his master's attention by his love of art. Tassi himself was a landscape painter, who had been brought up in the school of Paul Brill. In

addition to cooking for the painter, Claude performed the duty usually assigned to the pupil or studio servant of grinding his colours. The extraordinary aptitude of Claude induced Tassi to teach him how to paint, and in a short time he made sufficient progress to assist his master in carrying out the frescoes in the Quirinal and Lancellotti palaces. Some years were thus spent.

When Claude was about twenty-five years of age, he made up his mind to return to Chamagne, evidently with the intention of settling down in his native place for the remainder of his days. He had already discovered his weakness in figure painting, and strove hard to improve himself; and accordingly received tuition from a decorative painter, of local reputation, who lived in Nancy.

From some cause or another his experiences in France were not to his liking, and we find him in 1627 again taking the road to Italy. For some time his fortunes at Rome were not in the ascendant, and he found it difficult to keep body and soul together. Fortunately he had come across the well-known German painter, Joachim Sandrart, a man of serious views and great capacity for work. The two men, being of kindred temperament, encouraged each other. Claude was the harder worker, and laboured

incessantly to improve his style. He forsook the teachings of the school and studied Nature direct; the effect of light in its multitudinous aspects engrossed his attention. His plodding and great originality gradually obtained recognition for him. When once the tide of fashion had set in his direction he found it difficult to keep pace with the commissions which flowed in from every side; but in spite of the pressure under which he worked there is no sign of hurry in any of his productions. He was an artist pure and simple, working for the love of art, who never allowed monetary considerations to enter into competition with what he considered was his proper course. His slowness was proverbial. He was so scrupulously conscientious that he worked for a fortnight frequently on some detail without arriving at the effect he wanted. Another quality he possessed, and this has proved of great service in the identification of his works, was method. He made a sketch of every picture he painted, and frequently on the back wrote the name of the purchaser and the date of its completion. This series of memoranda is now in the possession of the duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, and was splendidly engraved by Richard Earlom at the end of the eighteenth century.

As an etcher Claude ranks very high. His etchings are full of the atmospheric charm that renders his paintings so absorbingly interesting. They show great facility in the handling of the needle; but in spite of this facility they are seen, upon close examination, to have been every whit as carefully wrought as was his work in oil. The large quantity of drawings, all of them studies from Nature, existing in the great collections of Europe are striking evidences of the painstaking work he did throughout his life.

Claude has always been held in high esteem by artists and connoisseurs, and if he has occasionally suffered from the vagaries of fashion, his transcendent merits have always restored him to favour. In the treatment of light he has never been surpassed; not even Turner has eclipsed him in this respect. In comparing these two great painters we must never lose sight of the fact that Turner was not the pioneer, and that thus he had the advantage. Claude, Wilson, Rüysdael, and Cüyp had carried ærial effect to a wonderful pitch before his time, and upon these men Turner founded his style. Certainly towards the middle of his life he considered that he was more than a match

*Claude* *Photo. Hanfstaengl*

THE MARRIAGE OF ISAAC AND REBECCA

*(National Gallery)*

for Claude upon his own ground, a conviction which led him when bequeathing his landscapes to the National gallery to make the condition that two specified ones should be hung beside the two great Claudes.

If we reflect upon the meagre material Claude had to work upon we can best appreciate his achievements. Few can stand before one of his sunrises and not be impressed by the wonderful rendering of cool vaporous light spreading over the landscape until it is lost in the dim distance, or before one of his brilliant sunsets and not appreciate the warm haze of the evening. In the treatment of ærial perspective he is quite as subtle as Cüyp at his best. That these qualities were recognised in his own day is evidenced, as has already been stated, by the patronage he enjoyed. Amongst those who befriended him in this way were the Cardinals Rospigliosi and Bentivoglio, and Bethune, the French ambassador in Rome. It must not be forgotten that his popularity was not the result of his being the only landscape painter in Rome, for the two Poussins and Salvator Rosa were his contemporaries, and they were all working there. Claude appears to have been a modest man, who was well aware of his short-comings.

He was constantly striving, for example, to improve his figure painting, and frequently would refrain from spoiling a picture by inserting figures of his own, having recourse to Andries Both or Francesco Lauri or some other painter in Rome more capable in this respect. Claude died in the city of his adoption in 1682, and was buried in the church of La Trinità di Monte.

His influence was widespread; he revolutionised landscape painting as it was then understood, and by the introduction of the treatment of light for its own sake; but the effect on his own countrymen was not immediately perceptible, and it is only in the following century that one begins to see the far-reaching effect of the innovation he had made. Claude is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in the history of landscape painting, and stands alongside Turner as a magician in the handling of light.

## CHAPTER VIII

### VOUET, BOURDON, LE SUEUR

WHILST the great masters of the French school during the seventeenth century were located in Rome, a number of relatively important men were working in France. They did not escape by any means the Italian influence, which, now that the period of decay had set in, was making more converts than at any previous time. Every painter who was able to visit for a time the artistic Mecca did so, frequently to the utter destruction of his originality. Even the Dutch school, little as it had in common with the Italian, furnished its full quota of disciples. Those who could not go to Rome endeavoured to supply for their loss with drawings by the masters they held in such esteem. Even Rembrandt succumbed, and surrounded himself with works which could hardly do him anything but harm. If the mighty Leyden master, that Dutchman of Dutchmen, was not immune to the all-pervading craze, it could hardly be

expected that lesser men should offer much resistance.

The principles which spread over the Alps into France had a curious effect upon the trend of art in that country. The best men endeavoured to absorb their meaning, and appropriated as best they could the mannerisms of Italian artists; but they could not overcome the influence of their nationality. This attempted transplantation of the art of one country into another was not productive of good or permanent results. Throughout this century we seem, in reviewing the French school, to be confronted with a hybrid and artificial art. During the seventeenth century, therefore, we must not look for any great number of striking personalities until the accession of Louis XIV, when, as we shall see later, the art of painting in France entered upon one of its finest and most characteristic phases. There were, however, good and sound painters, of whom Simon Vouet is one of the best known. He was born in Paris in 1590, and was the pupil of his father Laurence; at an early age he came to England, and from thence made his way to Constantinople. In 1612 he visited Italy, and worked for the next thirteen years in Venice, Genoa,

and Rome. Vouet was particularly impressed by the splendid colourists of the Venetian school, and all his later works show signs of a wish to emulate them. His colouring, however, lacks the learning and appropriateness of his models, and not infrequently one finds a blending of colours in his pictures which is in anything but good taste. His style is not unlike that of the later Italian masters, and whilst presenting a certain amount of accomplishment, lacks those moving qualities which go to the making up of great art.

Vouet was appointed painter to the king in 1627, and enjoyed the royal favour continuously for many years. Nicholas Poussin, however, came upon the scene, and was immediately favoured to Vouet's detriment. The partisans of the latter were furious, and did all in their power to render Poussin's position as unpleasant as possible. A climax was reached when the decoration of the Louvre was decided upon and entrusted to Poussin. The latter asked, quite naturally, that the undertaking should be entirely entrusted to him if he had the responsibility. An acrimonious discussion followed, which, by the way, was one of the chief reasons for Poussin's departure for Rome. The temperament of

the latter would brook no interference, particularly on the part of such an inferior painter as Vouet, and he preferred to return to his former tranquil existence. Vouet died in 1649. His works are numerous, but not very highly esteemed. Still he must be accounted one of the most important figures in the history of French art in the seventeenth century.

A man of far greater merit than Vouet was Sebastian Bourdon, who was born at Montpellier in 1616, and came when quite young to Paris, where he became the pupil of Barthélemy. He then went to Bordeaux and Toulouse, in both cities receiving great encouragement. From there he passed on to Italy, and spent eight years in Rome. Bourdon now considered his education complete, and accordingly returned to Paris, where he soon made a name. His circumstances permitted him to marry, and he took to wife Susanna de Guernier, widow of Nicholas Colsonnet, by whom he had nine children. This lady having died in 1658, within six months he contracted another marriage with Margaret Jumeau, who bore him seven children more. With such a family to provide for his energies were taxed to the utmost, and he produced a large number of pictures, the greater part of which

are of very good quality. In 1648 Bourdon was appointed painter to the king, and was one of the founders of the Academy. Being a protestant, upon the outbreak of the civil war he sought safety in flight and settled in Stockholm, where he was very well received; and here too he painted the fine portrait of Queen Christina, which was so beautifully engraved by Nanteuil. Affairs in France having become more settled, he returned to Paris in 1655. He was made rector of the Academy, and continued to be fully employed until his death in 1671.

It seems quite incredible that a painter of such undoubted accomplishments as Bourdon should not be in better repute with modern collectors. His chief works rank among the best seventeenth-century French productions, and some of them will bear comparison with those of Le Nain. This is more particularly true of the subjects he drew from peasant life; these, which are generally of small dimensions, are characterised by an unusual degree of refinement in handling and grasp of character. His touch is light and delicate, his drawing good, and colour agreeable.

Another man who plays an important part in the art history of this time is Eustace Le Sueur, a pupil of Simon Vouet, and one of the founders

of the Academy, who was born in 1617 and died in 1655. He early came under classical influence, and in all his work a spirit of restraint, bordering on severity, is discernible. His technique is sound, but his style is apt to be monotonous and devoid of interest. His subjects are almost invariably taken from the Bible or from heathen mythology.

The lines upon which French art was proceeding could not endure; for originality in every form was stifled. Inspiration can never be sought second-hand; and the influence of Italy was rapidly becoming tyrannical. Everything which did not conform to the accepted views of the men who ruled this movement was contemptuously rejected. Louis XIII, harassed by political disasters, showed but little interest in culture: Richelieu patronised it in a vainglorious sort of way. The consequence was that, whilst the painters of the Netherlands and Flanders were going on from triumph to triumph, those of France were retrogressing. During this period of decadence the Fleming, Philip de Champaigne, stands out prominently. He was one of the few who did not succumb to the prevailing fashion: his portraits have all the vitality of his countrymen, though, whenever he attempted, as he was sometimes compelled to do,

to paint history, he is but little better than the numerous painters who were working around him. It is curious that, living as he did for the greater part of his life in France, he did not exercise more influence on his contemporaries. It only needed a more settled state of affairs throughout the kingdom to bring about a radical change in taste: this change followed the death of Louis XIII, and during the reign of his successor we shall see the beginning of the greatest period of French art.

# CHAPTER IX

## THE REIGN OF LOUIS XIV—COLBERT AND LE BRUN

The reign of Louis XIV was an eventful period in the history of France. The affairs of the nation were, after the death of Mazarin in 1661, no longer entrusted to the caprice of ambitious and unscrupulous cardinals. No time was lost in intimating the coming great change in administration, for when, directly after the death of the cardinal, Harlay de Chanvallon, president of the council of the clergy, asked Louis to whom he was now to apply with reference to affairs of state, he received the reply, "To me." The autocratic and imperious will of this sovereign was to be in many ways of immense good to France. The country was soon to feel that it had for its ruler a man who knew his own mind, and one who, whether his acts were for good or evil, would brook no interference.

Louis found France in a sorry condition.

The wars of the preceding reign, undertaken by Richelieu and Mazarin, had ended disastrously, and had impoverished the country. Industry was at a low ebb, and there was a lack of confidence everywhere; even agriculture, owing to the unsettled state of affairs in general, was in none too flourishing a condition. In resolving to govern without a prime minister Louis was not only following his own inclinations, but the advice he had received from Mazarin himself. The great cardinal had doubtless been impressed with the young man's strength of will, and foresaw that any division of authority would certainly and inevitably lead to disastrous consequences.

The king's council, formed by Mazarin, consisted of the chancellor Segur, keeper of the seals; Tellier, minister of war; Lyonne, minister of foreign affairs; and Fouquet, minister of finance. The last named held office but a very short time, for his criminal exactions were exposed to the king by Colbert. This great man, who was to exercise a tremendous influence upon the destiny of art and commerce in France, was appointed minister of finance in Fouquet's place, with the title of comptroller-general. Colbert was the son of a Rheims wool-

merchant, and by sheer ability had forced his way to the front. His financial and commercial genius was to be of the greatest value to the king; no problem was too tough for him, no difficulty insurmountable. He met with the most determined opposition from corrupt officials all over the country, but each one in turn had to yield. As a worker he hardly knew the meaning of fatigue, and the dogged determination he showed in the pursuit of any object upon which he had set his mind, in the end always achieved his desire. He discovered a useless expenditure of the country's money in many directions, and by a ruthless, but at the same time wise, economy, put its finances in a better state than they had ever been at any previous time. He not only increased the amount of the revenue, but reduced that arising from taxation, and thereby at once pleased the king and brought the people to his side.

Colbert's great object was to make France the first commercial country in Europe. He, accordingly, never lost an opportunity of encouraging industry of every kind; and whenever a new and sound commercial project was brought before him he liberally supported it with money and influence. The minister recognised, too,

that France needed outlets for her products, and spared no pains to found colonies and to establish such relations with other countries as would further his ends. The establishment of chambers of commerce and insurance, the construction of canals and other means of facilitating transit, and a thorough overhauling of the customs were all of the greatest benefit to France. He was so thoroughly wrapped up in the furthering of industrial interests that he to some extent sacrificed agriculture; indeed he was obliged to do so, for no country can be pre-eminent in both at the same time. One of the measures he took resulted in the alienation of the sympathies of the agricultural classes from him; this was the prohibition of the export of grain, and even in some cases of its free circulation in the interior. Colbert was quick to perceive which industries were best suited to France, and rarely did he make a mistake in wasting money or time in assisting any that were not destined to be lasting.

All this activity had a direct effect upon art. Amongst the projects he formed and carried into execution were several having for their object the giving to France an absolute supremacy in the decorative arts. The systematic mind of Colbert could not be brought to grasp

the fact that an artist displays the greatest originality of which he is capable when left to pursue the course he has mapped out for himself, untrammelled and unfettered. Such a life he regarded as misspent, as so much energy misdirected and wasted. His ideal was organisation. If only all these fertile and ingenious brains could be brought under a central control what splendid results could not be achieved! He saw the capacity of the Frenchman for decorative and applied art, and wished to utilise it in such a manner that France should surpass all other countries by the wholesale production of works of art, and that all this latent energy should be made a source of prosperity to the country. His reasoning was but the logical outcome of the tendency of art throughout Europe. Had not Rubens in Antwerp, Vandyck in London, and even Velazquez in Madrid, their factories? What more than good examples of decorative art were the vast portraits which came from these factories, or, at any rate, such of them as were never touched by the masters themselves? Why should not the French, who in the matter of decorative art were second to none, secure a monopoly? It was a business proposition, and was carried out in a systematic and business-like manner.

Colbert saw that the Flemings did an enormous trade in tapestry; Brussels and other centres found in its production one of their staple industries. The deterioration in style, in design, and in certain branches of its manufacture was strikingly apparent to a man endowed with the keen perception of Colbert. The struggling industry in France had only been sustained in the past by grants of money and privileges; this artificial bolstering up was only too apparent when any portion of this support was withdrawn. Colbert found the Gobelins' factory in a deplorable state, and determined to reorganise it. He saw that to maintain successfully the struggle against the Flemings, he must not only employ the best workmen, but, further, he must place the French factory in a position to reproduce designs of a higher quality and of greater originality than its competitors. The man he placed at the helm was Charles Le Brun, whose appointment was destined to exercise a profound influence on French art in all its branches. This was effected unconsciously by means of centralisation of direction; by diverting taste into the approved channels the hitherto straggling and disjointed elements were welded into a homogeneous whole. Decoration was the end to be served. Even the

portrait painters came under the all-subduing influence. And from the reign of Louis XIV until the revolution the history of France presents the most perfect unity of purpose in its artistic activity the world has ever seen.

Charles Le Brun was born in Paris on the 24th of February 1619. Even in his early days his aptitude for drawing proclaimed itself, and attracted the attention of Chancellor Séguier, who was so impressed with the promise he showed, that he lodged him in his own house. He then placed him under Simon Vouet, where he made considerable progress. But whilst Vouet was capable of bringing out the technical ability of his pupil, it is doubtful whether he exercised a beneficial influence in the development of his originality. A few years were thus spent, and then Nicholas Poussin arrived from Rome and astounded Le Brun with the profundity of his genius; the works of Vouet must, indeed, have appeared vapid and empty beside the paintings of the mighty Poussin. He prevailed upon his protector to allow him to accompany Poussin to Rome, where he remained four years. The surroundings amidst which he now found himself proved of the greatest possible benefit to him, and he speedily began to create a reputation for

himself. Upon his return to Paris Le Brun found that his fame had preceded him, and commissions were waiting. He speedily became one of the foremost painters, and figures in the list of the founders of the Academy, of which he was later to become professor, chancellor, rector, and finally director. The artistic qualities and capacity for organisation of Le Brun appealed strongly to Colbert, and he appointed him director of the Gobelins in 1660; this office Colbert did not intend to be simply a branch of the general administration, subject to all manner of restrictions from officials. Le Brun was given an absolutely free hand, with instructions to organise the factory; he was responsible for the subjects undertaken and for carrying them out. To him, then, alone is due the credit for the wonderful tapestries which were produced in such quantities under his direction. The great majority of them he himself designed, and one has but to enumerate the "History of the King," the "Elements," the "Seasons," the "History of Alexander," and the "Acts of the Apostles" to appreciate the magnitude of the work he achieved.

Viewed from a purely artistic standpoint, the whole of French, and most Flemish, tapestry is

a mistake. Tapestry should never undertake a task which is better accomplished in paint, and which by its very character is too difficult for its achievement. The aim of tapestry should be decoration, and the more unconventional the design the better the result will be. Hence the superiority of the tapestries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries over those of a later time.

Leaving aside these refinements of criticism, it can be truly said that no finer tapestry has been produced than that which came from the Gobelins. Further, of all the tapestries coming from the Gobelins, those produced under Le Brun are the best in taste and the most conscientious in workmanship.

Le Brun's work at the Gobelins, the constant demands made upon his time by the need of superintendence and designing, left him little time for painting. But he was an indefatigible worker, and has left as many paintings as many masters who had no other occupation; and Louis was so pleased with his work that he appointed him his principal painter in 1662. The extraordinary activity of Le Brun is evidenced by the fact that, in 1666, he founded the French Academy in Rome. He was no doubt influenced by the deplorable state into which French

art had fallen, and the necessity of encouraging the rising generation to proceed to Rome, the fountain-head of inspiration as it was considered in his day; he had had his years of training there, and wished others to have the same advantage. A further honour was bestowed upon him by Rome, for he was made a prince of the Academy of St. Luke. And the flattering attentions bestowed upon him by the king were by no means exhausted; Louis ennobled him in 1662, and took him with him upon his Flemish campaign in 1677.

The turn of fortune was soon to come, however, for his friend and admirer, Colbert, died in 1683. Louvois, one of Colbert's bitterest enemies, was appointed to succeed him, and every one who had been favoured by the late minister was marked out for the special hatred of his successor. Amongst the number was Le Brun. The king, engaged always with high affairs of state, working as much as possible single-handed, and fully occupied with foreign politics, had neither time nor inclination to concern himself with the arrangements of the minor departments. Le Brun fell into disgrace and Mignard was favoured to his detriment. The situation in which he found himself speedily became very

difficult, and the keen sense of injustice which he felt rendered his last years miserable, and doubtless hastened his end. He died at the Gobelins on the 12th of February 1690.

Le Brun was one of the most illustrious members of the French school. He had found the art of his country in an unsatisfactory state, but by his example and teaching inculcated sound principles which were later to bear fruit; but it cannot be said that in his works we find any of those higher qualities which can be classed as inspiration. He was brilliant within limits, an admirable exponent of technical excellence, a man who detested superficialities and sentimentality.

# CHAPTER X

## MIGNARD, VAN DER MEULEN, AND COYPEL

Peter Mignard was a man of diametrically opposite temperament to his contemporary and rival Le Brun; his system of life, his ideals, and his character were quite different. Instead of the learned and serious art to which Le Brun devoted his life, Mignard was content with something lighter and more self-evident. That he possessed great talent may be seen from the many good, one might even say fine, portraits he has left. But he was neither strong enough nor deep enough to leave such a mark as Le Brun left upon French art.

Peter Mignard was born at Troyes in 1610. His parents had destined him for a medical career, but a decided leaning towards art compelled them to abandon the idea. When only twelve years of age he was placed with the painter Boucher, at Bourges, with whom he lived for a year, learning the rudiments of his art. He was then sent for a couple of years to

Fontainebleau, that he might there study the many fine things which had been brought together in the palace. Having in this way acquired a certain amount of experience Mignard, then about fifteen years of age, returned to his native city, where he was soon entrusted with a not inconsiderable amount of work. One commission entrusted to him was the decoration of Marshal de Vitry's house at Coubert-en-Brie, a work of considerable magnitude in consideration of the youth of the artist. In spite of this success he felt that he had not had sufficient training, and betook himself to Paris, where he entered the school of Vouet, who at once appreciated the talents of the young painter, and was so impressed by his personality that he made him the offer of his daughter in marriage. This flattering attention was not altogether to Mignard's liking, and in order to relieve himself of the unpleasant task of refusing the proposal he left Paris and went to Rome, which he found so pleasant that he resolved to live there for the rest of his life, and, as a matter of fact, did remain there for twenty-two years. He received ample encouragement from his own countrymen; and amongst other important undertakings that came his way was a commission to copy all the

pictures in the Farnese gallery for Richelieu's brother, the cardinal of Lyons; he was, too, in high favour with the clergy, and painted portraits of more than one pope. The quantity of religious pictures he painted at this time was phenomenal. For his Madonnas he had as model Anna Avolara, the daughter of a Roman architect, a girl of rare beauty, whom he married in 1655. Mignard's fame had long since reached his native country, and his sojourn in the south was broken a year after his marriage by receiving a command from the king to return to Paris. He set out for that city, but when he reached Avignon he was too ill to proceed, and was obliged to stop there for some time. It was at Avignon that he first met Molière, whose portrait he painted several times.

The fame which Mignard had by this time acquired procured for him more than a sufficiency of work. In addition to an enormous number of portraits he executed extensive decorations at Val-de-Grâce, Saint-Cloud, Versailles, and the hôtel de Hervar. Fashionable Paris divided its attention between him and Le Brun, and the jealous temperament of Mignard caused a feud to spring up between them. This was probably the real reason for his refusing to join the

Academy, but after the death of his rival there was no longer any reason for his remaining outside, and, as already mentioned, he became in turn professor, chancellor, rector, and director. Louis XIV held him in high esteem, and was never tired of sitting to him for his portrait. Mignard died in Paris in 1695 at the advanced age of eighty-five years, and was buried at Saint Roch.

As a portrait painter he will always occupy an important place, for he was in high favour with the intellectual and aristocratic classes, and bequeathed to posterity a large number of portraits of prominent personages. His style, however, is superficial and lacking in many of those qualities that go to the making up of a great artist; his line, for instance, is deficient in suppleness, and his colouring not infrequently cold, even repelling. It may be doubted whether his residence in Rome did not do him harm. The very eclecticism of the Italian masters with whom he was surrounded was not a factor which made for good; the effect of their principles can be seen in his numerous pictures of the Virgin and Child.

Mignard, however, possessed in an eminent degree that facility of expression which constitutes an important part of the decorative

painter's equipment. A proof of this is furnished by the results of the influence he exercised on the royal manufactures during the short time in which he was director. Though Le Brun's ideas could not be uprooted in the five years that remained to Mignard between his appointment to the coveted post and his death, the time was sufficient to destroy in part the severity and lofty standard that Colbert and Le Brun had striven so hard to inculcate.

At this point in the story of French art the importance of the Flemish artist, Adam Francis van der Meulen, cannot be overlooked. Born in Brussels in 1643, he became a pupil of Snyders, under whom he developed a taste for painting battle pictures and military scenes in general. The brutality of the master's pictures found no echo in those of the pupil, who preferred the more showy side of a soldier's life; splendour of uniform and the gallantries of camp life were much more to his liking than the carnage of the battlefield.

In the efforts which Colbert was making to transplant the decorative art of Flanders to French soil a man of van der Meulen's capacity was not likely to be overlooked. He was invited to Paris, where he executed for the

Gobelins a number of designs that were most sumptuously carried out in tapestry several times. It was he who, under the superintendence of Le Brun, painted the greater part of the models for the series called the "History of the King." Here he was enabled to bring all his great talents into play, and that his treatment of the warlike events of the reign of the Grand Monarque was popular is evidenced by the number of repetitions in existence. His style, though essentially Flemish, was softened by his residence in France. In colouring and composition he submitted to the influence of Le Brun, who appreciated his talents to the full, and succeeded in directing his energies into the decorative channel, which was the all-absorbing end in view whilst he directed the Gobelins. Van der Meulen studied his subjects first-hand, for he followed the king about on his campaigns, and was present at most of the important battles and sieges that later on he depicted. He continued to be well patronised until his death at Paris in 1690.

The Coypel family was destined to hold a prominent position from the end of the seventeenth until the middle of the eighteenth century, without, however, having a great influence

either for good or evil. Noël Coypel, the eldest of the family, was born at Paris in 1628, and died in 1707. He was first sent to Orleans to study under Poncet, but soon returned to Paris to receive instruction from Quillerier. He was made a member of the Academy in 1663 and was director of the Academy in Rome from 1672 to 1675. Coypel was essentially an historical painter, who almost always sought inspiration from classical sources. He carried his principles to the point of severity, and his pictures, as a rule, have a rather repellant coldness of feeling. At the same time it must not be forgotten that the art of all these men suffered materially by comparison with that of their successors. One feels that the style they acquired was transplanted and exotic, that its underlying sentiments found no real echo in the French temperament—and, consequently, it lacks the true ring of sincerity. That which is too restrained in feeling for painting may be admirable for tapestry, and such was the case with Coypel's work. He possessed all the necessary equipment for producing admirable decoration; he could manipulate a classical subject so that all the possibilities of charm and rhythm were brought into play.

Coypel would certainly have been better employed in such undertakings than in producing the not inconsiderable number of pictures he left behind him; his reputation would have been enhanced, and the world would have been enriched with many more hangings of the quality of the "Triumphs of the Gods." This series, put together by Coypel after cartoons which have been attributed to Raphael, was one of the most successful of the various series which came from the royal manufactory, and was repeated four times.

It will thus be seen that whilst we may deplore the lack of great achievement as far as painting itself is concerned during the reign of Louis XIV, we find ample compensation in other directions. The well-thought-out system of Colbert, so admirably carried into execution by Le Brun, had but one end in view, and that was the placing of art upon a more or less commercial basis in order that France might rank supreme in decoration. Independent art found no place in such a scheme. Men whose genius lent itself to decoration flourished exceedingly, whilst those who did not possess this adaptability, unless they had the good fortune to be portrait painters, were brushed aside.

*Coypel* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF JELAPOTTE

*(Louvre)*

Noël Coypel is one of those whose reputation is sustained by the part he played in the successful organisation of art.

Noël Coypel's son Anthony, who was born in Paris in 1661 and died in 1722, had also a hand in furthering the work at the Gobelins at a later date; as a painter he fills a secondary place in the school. The other two members of the family are Noël Nicholas Coypel, another son of Noël, who was born in 1692 and died in 1734, and Charles Anthony, son and pupil of Anthony (1694–1752), who held the important posts of keeper of the king's pictures and drawings, and in 1747 was appointed chief painter to the king, a post which his father had held before him.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE PORTRAIT PAINTERS RIGAUD AND LARGILLIÈRE

The two greatest portrait painters during the reign of Louis XIV, Rigaud and Largillière, lived well on into the reign of his successor. But their productions are just as characteristic of his reign as are the tapestries of Le Brun and van der Meulen.

It was an age of grandeur and ambition, of little regard for small things. Just as in politics, Louis thought on a large scale, bringing to bear the whole weight of his power to achieve his ends, so in matters appertaining to life the majestic and grandiose alone engrossed the attention of the nation. Callous and brutal as such an age must seem to us when viewed in the perspective of time it yet was more human and purposeful than that which followed it. There was method in the operations of Louis and his ministers; they knew what they wanted, and achieved their ends, bringing into play all the forces at

*Rigaud* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF LOUIS XIV

*(Louvre)*

their command. Such a state of affairs had its inevitable effect upon the nation in general; self-assertiveness was the order of the day, and those who were not prepared to act on it went to the wall. The spirit of the age is reflected in every phase of life. The architecture was bold and dominating; châteaux of immense size were alone in favour, and the embellishment of the interiors had to be proportionate to the grandeur of the buildings. The lofty façades were enriched with sculpture of suitable proportions; the huge apartments with the heavy and ostentatious furniture of Boule. The nobility followed the royal lead, and those whose restricted means did not permit this being done had perforce to fall out.

The same spirit is reflected in the portraits of the epoch. It is not to the portraits of Mignard that we should turn for what is most characteristic of the reign in this branch of art, but to those of Rigaud and Largillière. There is a bombastic sense of domination about their pictures which harmonised perfectly with their destined surroundings. This quality comes not only from the costume of the period, although great use is made of this, but from the sense of power and domination they were able to put into them.

Hyacinth Francis Honorat Mathias Peter Andrew John Rigaud, born at Perpignan on the 20th of July 1659, studied first at Montpellier and afterwards at Lyons. The metropolis attracted him, however, and he went in 1681 to try his fortune there; success came to him immediately. He caught the attention of Le Brun, who recognised that the genius of the young man lay in portraiture, and advised him to devote to it the whole of his energies. Very soon after his arrival the first prize in painting fell to him, and then his thoughts turned towards Italy. The fatal fascination of the Italian siren was sorely tempting him, but the sound advice of Le Brun prevented him embarking upon a course that would certainly have been fatal to his art. Every artist who went to Rome returned a painter of history; the classical fever was at its height, and a man who could not follow in the footsteps of the Caracci and Guido Reni was regarded as a failure. No advantage could possibly come to a portrait painter from a visit to Italy. All the great masters of the art during the century were Flemings and Dutchmen, and it was to their methods that the younger portrait painter was forced to look for his own advancement.

The advice of Le Brun was shown to be sound by the fact that within a few years Rigaud was regarded a master of portrait painting without a rival in Europe; and whilst we can now rectify this exaggeration, we are bound to admire his excellence. The greatest and most illustrious men and women of his time flocked to the fashionable artist. His production was prolific, and if a number of superficial portraits came from his brush, we must not forget the pressure under which he must have laboured to keep pace with the demand. Rigaud's manner must have been particularly to the liking of the aristocrats of his time. Just as Vandyck had been able to impart an air of aristocratic distinction to the heads of his English sitters, so Rigaud caught the arrogance and self-conscious superiority of the frequenters of the court of Louis XIV. He had, too, the knack of arranging the accessories to the best possible advantage. His draperies are studiously employed to throw into relief the principal parts of the picture, and a clever amalgamation of bold line and sumptuous colour imparts a most imposing appearance to many an otherwise commonplace portrait.

The art of Rigaud is part and parcel of the whole system under Louis XIV. He had his

factory, from which portraits poured out in endless number. But for all this Rigaud still preserved the personal character of his art; he is one of the leaders, one of the creators of the period. His amazing productiveness, combined with his extreme simplicity of life, should have led to better financial results than he achieved, for he died comparatively poor. Rigaud lived on the best of terms with his fellow artists. He was even intimate with the man who shared the town's patronage with him—Largillière; and his existence in consequence was free from those bitter jealousies that rendered the life of Le Brun almost unendurable.

Nicholas de Largillière was a man of quite different temperament. Here we have the artist who, having achieved fame and fortune, made up his mind to enjoy life to the full. Having a splendid house, and living in the best of style, may not only have gratified his natural taste, but possibly have been conducive to good commissions being given to him. His portraits are full of subterfuge; one feels the unworthiness of the tricks he brought to bear, but cannot deny that the result is alluring. How neatly he distracts the attention from some superficial piece of detail painting by the subtle use of that rich red velvet

he knew so well how to employ! These tricks he learnt in his youth, and it is in spite of them, and because of a certain power of rendering contemporary character, that he takes such a high rank in the French school. Born of French parents in Antwerp, on the 10th of October 1656, his artistic education was commenced under the tutelage of the painter Goebow. For a boy of Largillière's temperament, continued contact with such a voluptuous and sensuous painter as Rubens was without doubt not the best environment. Still worse, however, was to come, for the young painter in search of work and improvement went to England and became one of Sir Peter Lely's assistants; this occurred in 1674, and he remained here until Lely's death in 1680. Doubtless it was from this painter he learned those tricks of display and of pose that stood him in such stead in later years; at any rate, upon his arrival in Paris, friends were not lacking, and no less a person than Le Brun presented him at the Academy. His rise was now rapid. He was made academician in 1686, professor in 1705, rector in 1722, director in 1738, and chancellor in 1743. The maturity of Largillière was soon reached. In the early years of the eighteenth century his art had attained its

zenith; and afterwards an endeavour to perform all the tasks that presented themselves to him, led him to adopt a more facile execution. If Largillière be judged by his best portraits only, he will be seen to be an accomplished artist; but he can never be placed in the first rank. He was incapable of appreciating depth; with him the external manifestation was all that was interesting. One could be quite certain that when the portrait of a proud cavalier was sent home his wife would be in ecstasies about it. The lesson Lely had instilled into his pupil was not by any means forgotten. Instead of the languor and the sensuous ease favoured by Charles's court, the aristocracy of France demanded showy accessories. The toilet, magnificent embroidery, a scarlet uniform and gold braid, to the uneducated go to the make-up of an imposing portrait; a gallery of Largillière's portraits, however interesting historically, would by reason of their very flamboyance and theatrical treatment be insupportable.

As a colourist Largillière was a pure virtuoso; all his splendours are obtained by illegitimate means. The foiling of brilliant reds with greens, of crude orange with white, was the method made use of by him to demonstrate to a

wondering world how close to vulgarity he could run without overstepping the limits of good taste. But the fault must not be laid entirely to the artist's charge. He knew the public he was catering for, and accurately gauged its tastes.

We cannot deny that he accomplished to perfection that which was required of him by his patrons. He found himself in an ostentatious age, and its idea of flattery was to be painted with consummate skill in brilliant clothes and befitting surroundings. Largillière did this perfectly, and in consequence was one of the most successful artists of his time.

Whilst Le Brun and Mignard, Rigaud and van der Meulen belong entirely to the reign of Louis XIV, there is a looseness, a flow, in Largillière's line that heralds the coming of the rococo. His very artificialities and pyrotechnics, the theatrical trend of his sympathies, are connecting links with the new régime. Good qualities he assuredly had, and not the least of them was his grasp of individual character; a quality which is conspicuous by its absence in many of his successors. It was one of the redeeming features of his training in the school of Lely, who, with all his meretriciousness, had in this

respect maintained intact the Vandyck tradition. To see Largillière at his best one has to go to such pictures as the portrait of the painter with his wife and daughter in the Louvre, or that of Mademoiselle Duclos at Chantilly.

*Largillière* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST WITH HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER

*(Louvre)*

## CHAPTER XII

### DESPORTES AND OUDRY

The pleasures of the chase played a large part in the lives of the French nobility at this time. It is therefore surprising that more painters did not devote their attention to a branch of art that presented possibilities of popularity and ample patronage. Two names stand out prominently, however, as masters who achieved excellence that can even be compared with that of Snyders.

Both Desportes and Oudry were excellent painters, not only of animals, but also, within the conventional limits of the time, of landscape. Landscape was almost totally neglected in France; it found no place in the nation's art except as a background to heighten the effect of the central figures, and even then was carried out in the classical spirit that was in such favour under men like Poussin and Le Brun. Direct study from Nature was practically unknown. There were certain set lines upon which an artist might proceed, and any deviation from them would have

been deemed rank heresy. That is why we must not judge the landscape backgrounds of Desportes and Oudry as we should those of men who lived later and were unfettered by a dominating and imperious conventionalism. It is surprising that they were willing to learn so much from the great Flemings, in regard to animal painting, without seeing at the same time how immeasurably superior was their treatment of landscape to anything to be found in France.

Francis Desportes was born in 1661, and received his first training at the hands of a mediocre Flemish artist named Nicasino; a teacher who unfortunately was addicted to strong drink, and spent more time in the tap-room than in his studio. Such surroundings were not conducive to speedy progress on the part of the pupil, but the young painter at any rate managed to learn the rudiments of his art. Nicasino died in 1678, and henceforward Desportes was left to his own resources. He appears to have considered it inadvisable to place himself under anybody else. He therefore studied direct from Nature; and the progress he made in a comparatively short space of time in this way was so extraordinary that he was soon esteemed the best animal painter of his day.

*Desportes* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

*(Louvre)*

It was no artificial or temporary reputation he thus achieved, for throughout his life he was one of the most sought-after painters of France. That he was not looked down upon either by the public or his fellow artists, because of the subjects he painted, is shown by the fact that he was received at the Academy in 1699 and became councillor five years later. Previous to this however, in 1695, he went to Poland to seek his fortune, and was more than well received in that country. The following year Louis, thinking that France could ill spare such a brilliant decorative painter, recalled him and gave him as much work in the royal palace as he could accomplish. From this time onward, Desportes was in great favour with wealthy families for the embellishment of their country houses. Of the well-known places in which this talent was exercised may be mentioned Versailles, Chantilly, the château of Anet, Marly, La Muette, and the Palais Royal. His easel pictures, which are fairly numerous, were painted on very sound lines; they are generally in an excellent state of preservation, and enable us to form a just appreciation of his talent.

His animals are remarkably well drawn, and certainly show how conscientiously he had

studied their movements and character. That his genius did not limit itself to animals is demonstrated by his vigorous portrait of a huntsman in the Louvre, in which are found all the best qualities of the portrait painter of the reign of Louis XIV, without any of the artificialities or subterfuges for the sake of effect made use of by such men as Largillière. This picture is one of the most popular that Desportes painted. It is to be regretted that he did not devote more of his attention to portraying the owners of the animals as well as the animals themselves. He died in Paris on the 15th of April 1743.

John Baptist Oudry was much junior to Desportes, having been born in Paris in 1689. He received his first instruction at the hands of his father, and after a time became assistant to de Serre, painter of the king's galleries. Whilst thus engaged Oudry became enamoured of the art of Largillière, and persuaded him to take him as a pupil; the fashionable portrait painter took a great liking to the young man, whose talent he recognised. Oudry, desirous of emulating the painters who were working round him, took to historical painting; it says much for his judgment that he saw, after many fruitless essays,

that his genius did not lie in this direction, and abandoned it for decorative and animal painting. He had a distinguished career at the Academy, and was soon a great favourite with the aristocracy.

It is much to the credit of both Oudry and Desportes that so little jealousy existed between them. Their subjects and technique ran upon almost parallel lines, so much so, that it is not infrequently difficult to distinguish between their works. However, both had more than ample to employ their brush, and this fact, coupled with serenity of temperament, was sufficient to account for the pleasant relations that existed between them. Oudry steadily rose in favour under Louis XV, and was eventually appointed to the directorship of the tapestry factory at Beauvais. The state of affairs he found there was indeed lamentable; initiative of every kind had been sternly suppressed, and a spirit of decadence had set in—a spirit that was most difficult to eradicate. Oudry set to work with a will, and succeeded in restoring not only the prestige the factory had enjoyed in former days, but laid the foundation of future greatness. His enthusiasm and creative ability gave a new impetus to the workers; and his designs being eminently suitable for repro-

duction in tapestry speedily became popular all over France.

Very few decorative series, for example, have enjoyed the same prolonged favour as the well-known "Fables of La Fontaine." These hit the public taste at once, and were turned out extensively not only at Beauvais, but also at Aubusson. In this way, Oudry wrought a great work; when Boucher came on the scene in later years, he could not have achieved the results he did but for the years of patient industry expended by Oudry. Boucher was not the man to organise an industry of this kind; he had neither the time nor the temperament. To achieve the best results it was essential that there should be men at hand to transcribe his ideas into tapestry without much overlooking on his part. Thanks to Oudry this was possible. He had trained the men on the proper lines, and the principles he had inculcated were alive many years after his death. His administration of the tapestry factories was not always easy; when in after years he came to the Gobelins a conflict with the tapestry weavers ensued. Oudry—and in this he had all the painters who designed for the Gobelins with him—insisted that the design should be accurately copied; its colours should be repro-

duced exactly as the painter had created them. The weavers, on the other hand, argued that in tapestry many of these colours were unstable, and as they desired their work to endure they refused to employ anything which was liable to deteriorate. They had, they said, a scheme of colours, the secrets and use of which they possessed and from which they would not depart. The dispute was long and acrimonious, and in the midst of it Oudry died. This was in 1755. The anxieties and cares of his life had been assuaged by prolonged periods of sojourn in the forest, where all alone he could pursue the life of which he was so fond.

The adaptability of Oudry's designs for tapestry had long been recognised, and early in his career he was one of a number of men whom Peter the Great invited to Russia, with an idea of establishing a royal factory. He was, however, dissuaded from leaving France by the duke of Antin. It might well be said that he was the last of the organising geniuses of French art. The system originated by Colbert had borne good fruit. It had given the results the minister had intended, but it was destined to go to pieces for lack of men of the same capacity to hold it together. As fate would have it, the break-up

of the system was accompanied by enormous good; originality was allowed once more to assert itself, and for the next hundred years or so, there was a production of the finest examples of decorative and applied art France has ever known.

# CHAPTER XIII

## THE REGENCY AND THE REIGN OF LOUIS XV

The reign of Louis XIV had had an important influence upon the course of art. The system of organisation that had been attempted had achieved the desired results, and had placed France in the front rank of the nations of Europe in regard to the decorative arts. It is astonishing, in consideration of the almost bankrupt state of the treasury, that funds were forthcoming for such costly undertakings as the Gobelins and the Beauvais factory.

The death of the king brought about great changes, and the eventful hundred years, or so, which followed were, on the whole, the most remarkable period of French art. The organised system went to pieces, there was neither a Colbert nor a Le Brun to carry forward the work that had been founded; and even if there had been, it is doubtful whether the ensuing results would have been all that might have been desired. The French have been ever a race

brimming over with powers of initiative, but organisation has never been their strong point, and hence the best results have been achieved when each genius has been allowed to work out his destiny in his own way.

At the same time, the trend of art continued to follow the direction imparted to it by the general course of political affairs. The death of Louis XIV came, in some ways, as a relief to the nation. It was believed, the ambitious king being no longer there to control and direct, that an end would come of the disastrous wars that had so long devastated France and exhausted her resources. The hold that Louis had had upon the nation is in no way more clearly shown than in the sudden bursting forth of art in new directions; the dominating repression of all originality, except such as served the particular end in view, that had been practised by Colbert and Le Brun, was now felt to be at an end. Now that the king was dead, who was to exercise the power that had formerly been wielded by these men? Who was to play the part of censor in things artistic?

France found herself without a king. Louis XV was a minor, and a regency was necessary. The duke of Orleans was invested with the

royal power, and was much too fully occupied in repelling the attacks of his adversaries to be able to further the cause of art in any way. The luxury of the country was now beginning to grow, and a demand for less severity was springing up in all directions.

Painting was not the first of the arts to feel the effects of this: that of the cabinetmaker manifested the first sign of the approaching rococo. Such men as Cressent and Meissonier led the way in the new direction. The lines of the commode were no longer rigid and severe, the cabriôle leg began to be favoured; both the material used and the manner of manipulation differ from those of works of the reign that had just closed.

A very important change in the manner of living of the rich had contributed to this new departure. The huge palaces, which, under the leadership of Louis XIV had been so fashionable, were no longer in favour. The nobility found that they not only were most expensive to build, but that when built they cost large sums of money to furnish and maintain. Huge pieces of furniture were required, and as prevailing taste dictated that to be at all *á la mode*, one had to have the cupboards and cabinets of Boule

and his school, the initial outlay was a strain upon the resources of even the richest, and in spite of the outlay comfort was, to a great extent, lacking. The rooms were too large, the furniture too massive, even the pictures were big and ponderous. Man had had his say as far as decoration was concerned in France, and woman was henceforth to lay down the law which art was to obey. The boudoir was at first created as a refuge from the gigantic rooms of the time of Louis XIV, but as time went on, this charming apartment was to take a more important place. It soon became the most important, the most elegantly embellished room in the house. The ingenuity of the cabinet-maker was called into play to create the delicate *bonheur de jour*, the exquisite bureau, and the innumerable dainty ornaments with which it was furnished. In such an apartment the art of Le Brun or Vouet would be quite incongruous; the classical school had gone never to return. In its place a light, intensely vivacious, but not infrequently vicious art sprang up to meet the new conditions of life. This art, however, was founded entirely upon the life of the period, and faithfully reflects its virtues and failings, and it is this very intimacy and subtleness which

has stamped it as great, and which gives this period a right to be considered even to-day as one of the great epochs in the history of the world's art. The influence of religion no longer existed; outwardly the aristocracy were very religious—that is to say, they observed the outward ceremonies of religion—but there were very few who went further and troubled themselves much about the spiritual side of life. The aristocracy had so effectually usurped the power, that they alone were the patrons; the *bourgeoisie* might never have existed had it not been for a few men, such as Chardin, who kept aloof from the general mass of painters of their time and pursued their own ideals without paying any regard to fashion. Although the period of transition called the regency was a connecting link between two distinct styles, the change was effected with such rapidity, that remarkably little remains to us of the fascinating products of those few years.

The evolution of ideas in such circumstances is always a matter of great interest, and the evolution of those of the period known as the regency affords no exception to the rule. The dead weight of tradition had been lifted, and artists were now free to work as they would. It was

inevitable that there should be excesses, and all things taken into account, the fact that there is so little to deplore says much for the artist's power of self-restraint. The worse excesses, indeed, came at a later date when there was less excuse for them.

# CHAPTER XIV

## ANTHONY WATTEAU

THERE are certain names which stand out prominently in the history of French art, and amongst the most illustrious is that of Anthony Watteau, Flemish in reality, French by the accident of war. He is one of those masters who, by reason of their transcendent merits, can be claimed for the world. It is no longer a question of century or country; Watteau has long since been enrolled beside Titian and Rembrandt, Velazquez and Rubens, as one of the greatest masters of all time.

It was by a mere accident that Watteau was born a Frenchman, for it was only six years before his birth, which occurred in 1684, that Valenciennes became a part of France by the treaty of Nimeguen. The change of course was purely a political one; Watteau's early training and the surroundings which influenced him were Flemish. The conflicting accounts his contemporaries give of his parents render it difficult to know under what circumstances he was brought

up. But from the general evidence we may reasonably assume that the education he received was of a very modest description. His fondness for art soon manifested itself, and led to his being placed with James Albert Sérin, who held the first place at Valenciennes at that time. It is probable that this mediocre painter taught him little more than the actual mechanical side of his art. When Sérin died Watteau had been four years with him, but still lacked experience and direction. At the same time the young painter had had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the works of Rubens (the master whose influence was to contribute so much to the making of his future career) through the medium of one or two altar-pieces in the vicinity of Valenciennes. In the town itself he had access to works by Vandyck and Martin de Vos, which, doubtless, proved a help to him. Watteau was now at the critical moment of his career. Had he turned north he would assuredly have come under the spell of the Flemish school, with which he had so much in common; the interiors of Brouwer and Teniers would undoubtedly have supplied him with subjects for emulation quite in keeping with his temperament as far as technique is concerned.

He decided, however, to go to Paris, and this step resulted in the creation of one of the most truly national artists France has known. What his first occupation in the French capital was has not yet been ascertained. He is said on the one hand to have worked under the great designer Bérain at the Opera, and by other writers to have been employed by a picture manufacturer; a man who kept a numerous body of assistants, each of whom mechanically performed one and only one part of each picture. Judging from the character of Watteau's art at this time, the suggestion that he worked under Bérain is not improbably what really happened. Bérain's name will ever be remembered in connection with Louis XIV decoration by the quality and phantastic conception of his grotesques; many of which were superbly carried out in marquetry by Boule.

But this influence in Watteau's works may have come to him through his friend Claude Gillot. This remarkable man, who lived a year after Watteau had been carried to the grave, was indeed an innovator. In an age when all was serious and classical, he, with his fantastic subjects, must have been looked upon as a disturber of the peace. His method had no doubt been

suggested to him by the study of Bérain. It is curious that we should know so little of his works; and it is not improbable that many are passing to-day under other and greater names. There is no doubt that Watteau received considerable benefit from his connection with Gillot. It was just the sort of training he required to soften a certain coarseness which he had acquired with his provincial training at Valenciennes, and to prepare him for contact with the works of the Venetian masters who were to exercise a considerable influence upon his later productions. But a quarrel broke out between the friends, and resulted in a separation. He now came in contact with Claude Audran, the keeper of the Luxembourg, and an excellent designer of the same kind as Bérain. The idea of living in the same house with Audran was not devoid of attractions; a great one would be daily intercourse with a man who had plenty to do, and at the same time there would be an opportunity for the development of his own talent. Watteau had already had considerable experience in this kind of work, and no doubt Audran knew his capabilities. Audran's own style, whilst preserving almost intact the tradition fostered by Colbert and Le Brun, amalgamated singularly well

with the light and airy touch of Watteau. He found that the latter's figures had a quite exceptional grace and daintiness, and resolved to retain him as long as he could. Watteau had, however, other ends in view than merely assisting Audran. He was busy drinking in all that Rubens—whose works were then housed in the Luxembourg—and the great Venetians, such as Paolo Veronese and Titian, could teach him. These lessons he turned to practical account by the constant employment of his pencil. The French capital too, and particularly the court, gave him every opportunity of studying those elegants who were later to furnish him with studies for his pictures. Meanwhile he had been admitted to the Academy on the 6th of April 1709; he decided to try for one of the higher prizes, but the spirit of the age, remorselessly classical, placed this beyond his reach.

Watteau had now been absent from his home for some years, and made a visit to Valenciennes an excuse for breaking with Audran. The latter does not appear to have paid him well; for when the time of departure drew near, Watteau found that he had not enough money for his journey. It was obtained by the sale of a small military picture to a dealer named Sirois, with whom he

remained on excellent terms for the rest of his life.

Upon his arrival at Valenciennes he found the whole country-side one vast military camp; and if he had gone with the object of finding rest and quiet, he must have been grievously disappointed. He, however, improved his opportunities by making a number of studies of military life, which served him in good stead upon his return to Paris.

These scenes from camp life are handled with freedom and knowledge, but lack the brutality necessary to convert them into really fine works of art. Watteau only saw the picturesque side of war, the elegancies of posture and movement; the clash of cold steel, the business of slaughter, had no attraction for him. This is written all over these early examples, and posterity has every reason to be thankful that fate directed his talent into a different channel.

When he returned to Paris he came into contact with Crozat, one of the richest men of his time, who possessed a splendid collection of pictures and drawings. Crozat took a great liking to Watteau, and invited him to stay with him, an invitation which Watteau gladly accepted. He was now enabled to get into closer contact

with his favourite masters than he had ever before been able to do. Rubens as a draughtsman, pure and simple, working for his own pleasure and not to gratify some patron, seized hold upon his imagination. Titian and Veronese, both of whom were amply represented in Crozat's collection, left an impression never to be effaced. This strange mingling combined to form the hitherto immature style of Watteau. He did not take Rubens and blindly follow his teaching without sifting that which was suitable to his end from that which was not; he left on one side the coarser elements in the character of the great Fleming. The wonderful "Kermesse," now in the Louvre, was studied for its superb sense of movement, for its vigorous grasp of life and human nature; but he did not go further, and we find no reflection of its vulgarities in the work of Watteau. The golden glow of Titian and his school was sometimes brought into play in a fine cabinet picture; whilst the jewel-like quality of Veronese at his best sometimes inspired the Valenciennes' master, as in the sumptuous "Ball under a Colonnade" at Dulwich. The sojourn in the hôtel Crozat was disturbing to Watteau. He was so fascinated with the many beautiful things he was daily discovering,

he was so intently in communion with the masters of old that he forgot the present.

He had been provisionally accepted as a member of the Academy on the 30th of June 1712; all that was now required was to paint his reception picture under the supervision of the painters appointed by the Council. A year and a half later the Academy reminded Watteau that he had not performed his task. The following year the same is noted, and still the painter made no effort to complete his title to election. Two more years rolled on, and still Watteau could not find time or inclination for the task. At the last meeting in 1717 he must have been told that the patience of the Academy was exhausted, and that it was now or never. Brought face to face with the reality of the situation and not wishing to forego the coveted honour, Watteau resolved to do what was required of him, and hurried off to the Louvre, where the picture had to be painted, intending to accomplish the disagreeable task as quickly as possible. He took as his theme the "Embarkation for Cythera," and the picture is to-day one of the glories of the Louvre. The light and spirited handling of this superb composition, its golden and luminous colour, the poetry the master has infused into it—

*Watteau* *Photo. Giraudon*

EMBARKATION FOR CYTHERA

*(Louvre)*

all combine to make it one of the most beautiful examples of Watteau in existence.

The picture was accepted and Watteau received into the Academy. A pleasant feature of the meeting at which the painting was accepted by the Academy was the signing of the minutes by Watteau's old friend Gillot. This fact shows that either the quarrel between them, if indeed there had ever been one, was healed, or that Gillot's appreciation of Watteau's talent outweighed any ill-feeling he might have against him.

A later version of the "Embarkation for Cythera," more highly finished and with some variations, was painted by Watteau; this, after passing through at least one great French collection, is now in the royal palace at Berlin.

The restlessness which had characterised his life up to now was on the increase. He could not, for example, remain long in any one apartment; even a continued residence in one quarter worried him, and his friends were perplexed to find a reason. At the beginning of 1719 he was with his old friend Sirois when a wish came for a removal to a newly found acquaintance, Vleughels, in the Faubourg St. Victor. This new arrangement did not last long, for towards the end of

the same year Watteau made a visit to England. Although the disease had not yet made great progress, Watteau was consumptive, and it has been said that having an inkling that all was not well with him he came to London to consult Dr Richard Mead, whose fame had spread over Europe. It seems more likely, however, that his restlessness was the real explanation, coupled with a desire to see London and work there for a while.

Watteau's fame had preceded him and he did not lack commissions. Two pictures that were in Dr Mead's collection are said to have been painted during his stay in London.

He found London the reverse of what he had pictured it. After Paris, to him it was cold and repelling; indeed, in his condition of health a worse climate could not have been found, and in London his malady developed. His bad impressions of the English capital were enhanced by the fact that he did not speak or understand English.

It was in London that he met Philip Mercier (a Frenchman born in Berlin and brought up under the guidance of Pesne), who in course of time became one of his imitators. Eight months' residence in England was all that Watteau allowed himself, and in the August of 1720 he was back

again in Paris. He went to live with his old friend Gersaint, the man who in the first place had introduced him to Sirois, but his disease rapidly becoming worse and worse he insisted on making another change. With the ever-present optimism of the consumptive, he believed that good country air would work a change, and he went to Nogent to stay in the house of his kind friend, the Abbé Haranger. The change did not produce the desired effect, and he was seized with a craving to go to Valenciennes; so convinced was he that a visit to his native town was all that he required to restore him to health that he got Gersaint to realise his belongings in order to provide the necessary funds. Then came the difficulty of moving him. He was so weak that there could be no doubt that a journey would prove fatal; and so day after day was passed in waiting till he should have regained strength. This was never to be, and on the 18th of July 1721 he breathed his last, in the presence of the faithful Gersaint.

The work of Watteau created a new epoch in French art. Painters had hitherto been content with seeking inspiration from the classical compositions of the Italians; but the Valenciennes' master had instinctively grasped the spirit of the life lived by the French upper classes. His pro-

ductions breathe the spirit of his age. The luxury and elegance, hardly yet in a decadent stage, presented him with infinite charm and pose and line.

Gallantry carried on amidst most exquisite surroundings, picturesqueness of costume and alluring affectation of deportment presented him with unrivalled opportunities, of which he took ample advantage.

The spontaneity of his art, the obvious enjoyment of the splendid if somewhat frivolous scene that was being enacted before his eyes is strikingly manifest in all his mature productions. He shows a depth and a grasp of life and character which none of his contemporaries or disciples achieved ; these qualities, joined with his superb technique, place him amongst the four or five really great masters that France has produced.

# CHAPTER XV

## LANCRET AND PATER

The success of Watteau, the acknowledgment that he was the painter who, of all his contemporaries, was best able to depict the spirit of the aristocracy of his time, could not fail to encourage imitation; it is indeed astonishing that more painters did not come under his influence. Perhaps many recognised that his was essentially a personal art, so fragile and so unapproachable that it would be hopeless to attempt to follow in his footsteps. Of the two men who can be classed as being of his school, Lancret and Pater, the former is the more interesting personality. He was less of the imitator than Pater, and moreover one observes in his work an endeavour to look at life with his own eyes. Born in Paris on the 22nd of January 1690, we find in him the Frenchman, pure and simple, unaffected by the Flemish influences amidst which both Watteau and Pater were born. In contact with the gay life of the capital from his early days, he needed no rigid

training to appreciate the splendour of movement and colour that was daily spread before him. His origin was humble—Robert Lancret, his father, being a cab-driver, and his paternal grandfather a labourer. Nicholas was the youngest of three sons. The eldest became a hairdresser's assistant on the Nôtre Dame bridge, and the second an engraver. The father died in 1695 when the future painter was still a child. Of the struggle of the early days we know but little. His brother, the engraver, gave him lessons in drawing and proposed to bring him up in his own profession. But the boy was drawn much more towards painting than to engraving. He wished to create and not merely to imitate, however eminent he might become in the latter capacity. He went first to Peret du Lin or, as the name is sometimes written, d'Ulin, an historical painter of whom we know very little beyond the fact that he was admitted to the Academy in 1707 and died in 1748. But the success of Watteau drew him to Claude Gillot, and he placed himself accordingly under this master. His talent developed rapidly, and in a comparatively short space of time he rose to great favour; but his contact with Watteau had perhaps more to do with the development of his style than even the

teaching of Gillot. He saw in the Valenciennes' master the ideal that he placed before himself, and set to work to develop his talents on similar lines. Watteau did everything he could to encourage him. He pointed out to him that a master was only necessary to instil the first principles, and that after these had been assimilated total independence was the surest road to success; he therefore advised him to leave Gillot and study Nature. He urged him to go into the country and choose the landscapes that appealed to him, and after selecting and carefully drawing his figures, to unite all into a harmonious whole as best suited his taste. Lancret, seeing the wisdom of this advice, followed it; he painted two pictures with which Watteau was well pleased. These two canvases, so full of promise, secured him admission to the Academy as painter of *Fêtes galantes*. The friendship of the painters was destined however to be of short duration. Lancret, who had found his field, developed rapidly, and one day two of his pictures were exhibited on the Place Dauphine; they were so entirely in the manner of Watteau as to be mistaken for his. That such should have been the case appears to have annoyed Watteau considerably, and a coldness sprang up between them which

lasted the rest of their lives. Whilst making every allowance for the fact that Watteau was the originator of the subjects to which he devoted himself, and that he had, perhaps, reason to be alarmed at one time that his imitators would eventually secure a portion of patronage that was bestowed upon him, one cannot help feeling that a powerful feeling of jealousy prompted his conduct towards both Lancret and Pater. He had himself to blame, to some extent, for the success of both, for it was he who had encouraged and taught them; but, on the other hand, there is no doubt that he had as many commissions as he was capable of executing throughout his short life. It not infrequently happens that an impulsive temperament such as his, in an excess of enthusiasm, urges upon another person a course of action which sober reflection shows to be detrimental to his own interest; if the damage done is irremediable a barrier is often raised against future friendship.

However, Lancret was fairly launched upon his career by this time, and became one of the most highly esteemed artists of the metropolis. He did not lack friends.

A well-known collector, Monsieur de la Faye, commissioned four pictures to be delivered as

he completed them; the amount of his remuneration being fixed. The artist set to work upon them. When he arrived with the second, his patron was so delighted with the progress he had made, that he paid him double the agreed price, which was indeed encouragement for the young painter. One may reasonably doubt as to whether Monsieur de la Faye was really out of pocket by his generosity, for Lancret no doubt put his best work into the remaining two pictures.

His industry was prodigious, he was rarely seen without a brush or a pencil in his hands, and as he led a simple life, the amount he was able to accomplish was great indeed. His merits were appreciated, too, in quarters from which one would least have expected recognition to come. Ballot de Tovot, in his interesting *Eloge de Sancret* relates how a small dealer conceived the brilliant idea of trying to induce him to touch up the old pictures that came from time to time into his possession. He saw that their saleable qualities would in this way be considerably enhanced. Upon making the proposition to the painter, he received the reply that he preferred to risk making bad pictures to spoiling good ones. Lancret was kind-hearted though

critical; he could not tolerate bad art, whether it emanated from an old or a modern master. It is on record that his contemporaries held his judgment in the highest esteem; and he was ever willing to admit new talent under whatever form it presented itself.

He had a nephew who, by some boyish freak, had so enraged him that Lancret was on the point of refusing to see him any more, when the youngster remembered how appreciative his uncle was of good draughtsmanship. He accordingly set to work to make a copy in coloured chalks of a painting by Guido. He had it shown to Lancret, who expressed admiration for it, and was then told that it was by his nephew. The painter softened at once, and, showing the drawing to all his friends, said: "My nephew is a sad scamp; but look at his drawing!" Lancret's critical faculties became well known, and his friend M. de la Faye wished to test his powers. Possessing a picture of the Nativity by Rembrandt, which Lancret greatly admired, de la Faye had a good copy made of exactly the same size as the original, and this one day he hung in its place when Lancret, with a number of friends, came to visit him. They examined the many fine things de la Faye had brought together, and

finally reached the Rembrandt. The ruse, however, completely failed, for Lancret immediately detected the copy, and said aloud to the friends who accompanied him that some one was attempting to deceive him. De la Faye asked him his reasons for so thinking, and Lancret immediately pointed out certain details in the picture that at once convinced his host that the joke could be carried no further, so he sent for the original.

The biographer followed this up by saying that Lancret was not less infallible in distinguishing all the old masters, with their different periods and manners. It would be interesting to know how many of his attributions would stand the fire of modern criticism!

Lancret was one of the most prodigious workers that the French school has produced. He was never known to indulge in any dissipation or to waste time. Up to the last few years of his life he was a most assiduous frequenter of the life school of the Academy. It is perhaps to this extraordinary care that his pictures owe their accuracy of figure drawing and sense of movement. If the groups with which they are animated do not show the exquisite delicacy and refinement of those of Watteau, they are nevertheless superior to the timid groups of Pater. He

can scarcely be termed a genius, but he is a sound painter, endowed with a good sense of colour; one nevertheless feels that his scenes from the aristocratic gallantries of his time lack the spirit and the fire his great contemporary infused into his best pictures. He never deviated from the path he had set himself at the outset of his career; Watteau, on the other hand, being of an impressionable nature, was dazzled first by one and then by another master of the past. The Watteau of the early years is essentially a disciple of Rubens, engrossed with the full-blooded life of youth. Contact with Titian, Veronese, and Giorgione showed him the occasional coarseness of the Fleming, and led him to follow as nearly as possible in their wake. The combined effect of all these impressions we get in his later years, and had he been granted a longer spell of life, it is not impossible that we should have seen still greater achievements upon original lines.

The superiority of Watteau over Lancret, the fundamental difference in the temperament of the two men, is nowhere more strikingly manifested than in their drawings. Those of Lancret are strikingly accurate, every detail being carried out with care, but in the character of the heads

and in details rather of spirit than of workmanship one sees the superiority of Watteau.

Prolonged and praiseworthy labour had its effect upon Lancret's health, and his friends endeavoured to dissuade him from too prolonged application at the school in the winter. But habits once formed are not easily shaken off, and he continued to over-exert himself; a gradual enfeebling of his health was the immediate result, and he died on September 14, 1743, in the city he loved so well.

His only diversion in life had been the opera, and from the celebrated actresses and dancers he received ideas for some of his best pictures. A charming example of this side of his art can be seen in the "Mademoiselle Camargo" in the Wallace collection. By far the largest collection of his works are in the palaces of Potsdam and Berlin; but those in the Louvre and at Hertford house are generally better preserved, and afford, on the whole, a better idea of his capabilities. As Lancret was much liked, his kindly disposition and courtly manner procured his admission to the best society, and contributed not a little to his prosperity.

A man of less originality was John Baptist Joseph Pater. He was in art the child of

Watteau; and he seems to have set out with the deliberate intention of approaching the latter as nearly as possible. He was born at Valenciennes on December 29, 1695. In his quite early years he showed a leaning towards art, which was encouraged by his father, who was a wood carver. The increasing fame of Watteau led him to leave his native town and betake himself to Paris with a view of receiving tuition from his fellow townsman. Watteau received him kindly at first, and Pater greatly benefited by the advice he gave him; Pater had, however, but little of the creative capacity of Lancret, and Watteau was not long in seeing in his pupil a possible rival. Accordingly he made it so uncomfortable for him that Pater was obliged to leave his studio: this injustice Watteau endeavoured to repair in the days when he lay ill at Nogent-sur-Marne. Filled with remorse at his former jealousy, he sent for Pater and made him paint for several hours daily under his eye; and when subjects occurred to him he gave directions as to how they should be carried out.

As Pater was of an exceedingly painstaking character, he was not slow in making considerable improvement in his style. After however only but a brief course of teaching

*Pater* *Photo. Moreau*

FÊTE CHAMPÊTRE

*(Louvre)*

Watteau died, and his pupil was left to pursue his own way.

It can never be claimed that Pater was anything more than a passable imitator of Watteau. All his subjects, his compositions, his disposition of the figures are those to be found in the works of his master, whose grace and elegance, however, he rarely caught. He strove hard to arrive at the poise of the head, and the wonderful foreshortening of Watteau, but instead of imparting distinction to his groups he was only able to infuse a sickly sentimentality.

Pater's pictures have a theatrical and rather forced effect. The colour scheme, too, is cold; the touch undecided and feeble; and the landscape backgrounds but feeble reflections of those of his great contemporary.

Pater was an indefatigable worker. It is said that he had a dread of poverty in his old age, and in consequence was rarely without a paint brush in his hand. This constant application to work brought about his death on July 26, 1726. He is said to have been of a retiring disposition; he made few friends, and rarely left his studio. In spite of the shortness of his life, it is astonishing, when his assiduous application is considered, that his works are not more

numerous than they are. By far the greatest number of them are to be found in the Wallace collection, the Louvre, and Potsdam, although excellent specimens are spread all over Europe.

With the death of Lancret the little group of painters of *Fêtes galantes* came to an end. Their work is one of the most original manifestations of French eighteenth-century art; it breathed the life of the century as no other could. For this little band of men, the poor and all their squalor did not exist; they were solely concerned with the ball and the masquerade, the feast of colour and movement.

# CHAPTER XVI

## CHARDIN

THE people counted for little in eighteenth-century France. They had no voice in their own destiny, and were in short regarded simply as the raw material with which to carry on commerce, agriculture, and war; the aristocracy, absorbed in its own selfish and idle pursuits, came but rarely into contact with the *bourgeoisie* and labouring classes. The appreciation and patronage of art was confined to the upper classes, who demanded that it should be the glorification of themselves and their amusements. It is not then greatly to be wondered at that the great majority of painters should have devoted themselves to the gratification of these tastes. There was one man, however, who stood quite aloof from the fashion of his time, and seeing the poetry of humble life, translated his thoughts into paint. This was John Baptist Simeon Chardin, who was born in Paris on November 2, 1699.

Chardin's father was a carpenter who had a

reputation for cleverness, being particularly skilful in the making of billiard tables, of which he made several for the king. He had a numerous family to provide for, and intended to bring up John to his own trade. But the carpenter's workshop was not at all to the boy's liking; and as he showed at a quite early age that he had a talent for drawing, his father had the good sense to allow him to follow his natural bent.

Young Chardin was placed with Cazes, a painter who enjoyed a considerable reputation in his own day, but is now hardly known. He was an historical painter, who worked in a cold and classical style, and may be said to belong to the backwash of the great school established by Poussin. Such a master could hardly be expected to do more for such an original person as Chardin than teach him the rudiments of his art. He seems to have been chiefly employed in drawing from the antique, a not particularly congenial task for one to whom life and living things were everything. In after years he used to complain bitterly of the utter waste of time all this assiduous study had been, and never ceased to urge painters to bring their pupils into contact with Nature as soon as possible.

Chardin soon deserted the studio of Cazes for

that of Noël Nicholas Coypel, to whom he acted as assistant part of the time he was with him. Here he lived in quite a different atmosphere and made such an improvement that in a comparatively short time he was able to transfer his services to John Baptist van Loo. The difference between these two painters was most marked. Coypel, who still retained the classical tradition, whilst tempering it with a regard for the taste of his time, was essentially a painter of the reign of Louis XIV; his style once formed, he seems to have been uninfluenced by the trend of events or by any regard for the evolution of thought going on around him. Van Loo, on the other hand, was a more enterprising person and approached his subjects in quite the spirit of his age; there is a lack of sincerity in the majority of his pictures which shows that he possessed but little depth of character. Chardin, with his serious thoughts on life, could hardly have been happy with either painter. His ideas constantly reverting to Nature could certainly not have had much in common with the bombastic compositions of Coypel, and it is a matter for wonder that his originality was not utterly crushed. He had need of instruction in the mechanical side of his art, and this is the only benefit he received from any of his masters.

Chardin's independence showed itself at an early age. He did not allow himself, in the hope of earning money immediately, to be drawn into the error, common enough in the case of young painters, of painting exactly what the public asked for. He felt himself drawn in a certain direction, and resolved to pursue it to the end. His wants were few, and the society in which he moved was modest; he could therefore afford to put his whole heart into his work and wait his time.

During those early years an incident occurred which brought Chardin before the public of his quarter. His father, who was known to a large number of people, had a friend, a barber-surgeon, who wanted a sign for his shop, and gave the order for it to young Chardin. The difference between the barber-surgeon's idea as to a suitable subject and that of Chardin was considerable; the former probably wanted a highly-coloured production, full of incident relating to the business carried on in the shop. But instead of introducing a man pulling teeth or performing some other surgical operation, Chardin took as his subject a duel; one of the combatants had been worsted by his adversary, and was being taken off the field to the barber-

surgeon's house. The scene was painted in the most realistic fashion. There was the sister of mercy sustaining the wounded man; the police official with his secretary, gathering the facts for the inquiry which would inevitably follow; the crowd gesticulating and full of curiosity. Chardin did not inform the barber-surgeon as to the nature of his picture, intending to give him a surprise upon its completion, so he had it hung above the door during the night, and when the barber came down to open his shop he found a small crowd engaged in discussing the new sign and laughing heartily, for Chardin had (unknown to them) taken his own family as models for the principal figures. Now, these good people were well known in the quarter, and we can hardly imagine that they were filled with delight at seeing themselves set out so conspicuously in a shop sign. The composition, however, seems to have been well thought out, and the painting executed in a praiseworthy manner, for it acquired some fame throughout Paris, and people began to inquire about the painter. The sign appears to have remained for some time over the little shop at the foot of the Pont Saint Michel, but, unfortunately, all trace of it has

disappeared. We only hear of it once more—at the Le Bas sale which took place in 1783 in Paris, when it was bought for 100 livres by Chardin's nephew. What is said to have been the original sketch for this interesting sign-board was purchased by the Carnavalet museum at the Lapertier sale in 1867 for 400 francs. This interesting document was destroyed during the Commune, and the only record we have of it is a small etching by Jules de Goncourt.

In 1728 Chardin first came into prominent notice. In that year he showed the fine canvas known as "The Skate," which to-day is hung in the galleries of the Louvre. He exhibited this painting at the *Exposition de la Jeunesse* that was held every year when the weather was favourable on the Place Dauphine and the Pont Neuf. The beauty of the handling and the extraordinary fidelity to Nature attracted the admiration of the numerous connoisseurs who made the round of the exhibition. Amongst them were some academicians, who became so interested in the young man that they induced him to present himself for the Academy. Chardin, who was always of a most modest and retiring disposition, could scarcely persuade himself

*Chardin* *Photo. Giraudon*

PASTEL PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

*(Louvre)*

that he had a chance of success, but nevertheless he decided to send in his application.

On the day upon which he had to present himself, he arranged a number of his pictures in a room through which the judges would pass. The academicians arrived one after the other, and all stopped to look at Chardin's pictures. Largillière was particularly impressed, and turning to Chardin, who was standing near, said to him, "You have some very beautiful pictures. They are certainly by a very good Flemish painter, and the Flemish is an excellent school for colour. But now let us see your own pictures." "You have just been looking at them," said Chardin. "What! those are yours?" cried the astonished Largillière. "Yes, sir." "Well, come along, my friend; you had better present yourself, for you will certainly be elected." Cazes, the first master of Chardin, arrived shortly afterwards and fell into the same error as Largillière. He had never been too pleased with his pupil; it might be that Chardin had not been sufficiently docile and willing to follow in the path which he (his master) had mapped out for him, but he recognised the merits of his achievements, and even went so far as to offer to present him to the Academy.

Chardin was received, and presented to the Academy two pictures, one representing fruit on a stone table and the other the famous "Skate." But all his success did not make the painter conceited. He continued to lead the simple life he had hitherto led, and devoted himself whole-heartedly to his work. His great fault was his lack of business capacity to turn his talents to profitable account. He sold his best pictures for ridiculously low prices, and was always being taken advantage of by the people with whom he came in contact. A year after his reception at the Academy he went to work for Meissonier, the celebrated metal-worker, who had been charged with the arrangements for the elaborate fireworks in honour of the birth of the dauphin. For his assistance Chardin was paid eight livres a day.

It is said that Chardin, even in the height of his fame, never sold a picture for more than 1500 livres, and that he sold a great number of his works for little more than was necessary to buy himself bread. It did not matter whether a picture had cost him much labour or had been dashed off in half a day. The probabilities were that the sale price would be the same.

A story is related of Le Bas, the celebrated

engraver, who came to Chardin's studio one day at the moment that he was finishing a beautiful still-life picture. "What a splendid picture," exclaimed the engraver, "I should like to buy it from you. How much do you want for it?" Chardin scratched his head, smiled, and then looking mischievously at Le Bas, said, "Oh, I think we can arrange that; you have a waistcoat which I like exceedingly, let us make an exchange." The engraver, as we can well imagine, was not long in concluding the bargain.

Chardin was now well known in Paris, and highly esteemed not only by his fellow artists but by the court; royal favour even went so far as to grant him a lodging in the Louvre in 1757. Previous to this, however, Chardin lived in the Rue Princesse amidst surroundings which gave him unlimited subjects for his pencil.

Accompanying his utter contempt for money, and all matters appertaining to business, he had a very keen sense of honour. In no episode of his life is this more amply demonstrated than in the history of his first marriage. Chardin's father, who held the strongest opinions upon the duties of parents, looked round for a suitable woman for his son to marry. He saw a very eligible person in Miss Margaret Saintard, the

daughter of a well-to-do merchant. The young lady seems to have been of an amiable disposition and, although she cannot be said to have enjoyed good health, there was nothing to prevent her from marrying. But the prudence of the parents of these young people did not allow an immediate marriage ; they determined that it should not take place until Chardin had made a sufficiently good position to maintain his wife and family in comfort. Some few months later the lady's father died, and when his affairs were gone into, it was discovered that he had left practically nothing. In the eyes of Chardin's father a marriage with a penniless girl was the last thing to be dreamt of, and he brought all the pressure in his power to bear upon his son to induce him to break off the engagement. But Chardin regarded a promise given in this way as something to be scrupulously fulfilled, and he married Miss Saintard on the 1st of February 1731. His wife, however, did not improve in health, and after presenting him with two children, a girl and a boy, she died on April 14, 1735, at the early age of twenty-six. The marriage appears to have been a happy one, and Chardin certainly was not in any hurry to contract a second.

However, in 1745, he married a widow named

Frances Margaret Pouget, who lived in the same street as himself; a circumstance which had probably given him ample opportunity for studying the lady's character. He did not make a bad choice. We are told that she was a perfect wife, economical and tactful, and that she managed Chardin's money and affairs so well that he was spared those financial embarrassments into which a man of his temperament might so easily have fallen. His reputation, and the esteem in which he was held by his fellow artists, continued to increase. In 1743 he was made councillor, and eleven years later treasurer of the Academy. His task as treasurer was not a very easy one, as his predecessor had left the accounts in such confusion that it taxed his abilities to the utmost to unravel them. He held the office of treasurer till 1774.

In 1759 he had been made *tapissier* at the Louvre. His duties were arduous and thankless. To him fell the lot of hanging all the pictures in the Salon, which was then held every two years. It is said that Portail, who was his immediate predecessor, retired to Versailles after he had finished his task, out of the reach of infuriated artists, who considered that justice had not been done to their works; a wise precaution,

for one cannot please everybody. Chardin, however, who had no country retreat to fly to, adopted quite other tactics. He not only remained in Paris, but actually placed himself at the disposal of every person who imagined that he had a grievance at the Salon. This system answered admirably. And in the course of a few years very little difficulty was experienced. But all credit is due to the skill and tact of Chardin in hanging. Diderot, ever ready to blame, and somewhat slow to praise, never tired of singing Chardin's praises in this respect. Enough has already been said to show that Chardin was the very reverse of mercenary. He had no interest in life except his art, and so long as he found the means of living he cared nothing for anything else.

It is related by the de Goncourts that after the death of Boucher, Chardin received an advance of four hundred livres in his salary for his work at the Salon. How little he expected this is evident from his letter of acknowledgment: "I am overwhelmed with the exceedingly kind news you send me. Unfortunately I am confined to the house by the infirmities to which I am so subject; but I hope soon to be able to seize some moment of amelioration to perform my

obvious duty, and ask you in the meantime to accept my apologies."

As time went on a severely critical spirit manifested itself more and more in the painter. He was never quite satisfied with anything he did; he thought that his zenith had passed, and that all his future work would show a declining power. He was wrong; but for his own happiness he had lived too long; if he had died while the spirit of struggle was still keen in him, while he still felt that he was on the upward grade, he would have been satisfied. The character of Chardin is strongly reflected in his works. The entire absence of pyrotechnics, the honest and strenuous endeavour to portray Nature as he saw her, dominates every one of his canvases. His style was founded on the great Dutchmen and Flemings, and he carries his painting of still-life further than any of them; whilst they were content with the mere outward appearances of inanimate objects, Chardin appears to invest them with a strangely human atmosphere. All these kitchen utensils, eggs, game, fruit, vegetables, are destined for the use of man; they have not simply been grouped together for the painter to paint. And these still-life pieces are, indeed, evidence of the grip Chardin had on the life of

the French *bourgeoisie*. The finest of his interiors vie with those of Pieter de Hooch or Vermeer of Delft in their subtle charm. They are as typically French as the others are Dutch. In the finest of his interiors, such as are to be found in the Louvre, in the collection of Prince Liechtenstein in Vienna, or in the royal collection at Berlin, Chardin shows his profound understanding of the *bourgeoisie* of his time. If any evidence were required of his disregard of money, here would be ample evidence. The great patrons of art of that time were the aristocracy; and the successful painters were those who painted subjects congenial to their taste. It must, indeed, have been galling to a man fond of money to have seen men with far less real talent than he possessed living in luxury. Boucher and Fragonard, Lancret and Pater, are instances of the financially successful painters of the time. But Chardin was never attracted by such transient glory as fell to them. He had his own life to live, his own subjects to paint, and so long as he satisfied himself he cared nothing about the rest.

The condition that painting had fallen into in his day may be gauged by an anecdote that is related of Wille, the celebrated engraver. In his early days he had manifested a certain talent for

painting, and his father, wishing to do the very best he could with him, took him to the best painter in his little native German town. When he heard the reason of the call the painter, in order to impress his visitor with his own importance, showed him several of his pictures. Amongst others he brought out a canvas from a corner of the room, and blowing the dust off it, said to Wille: "Here is a child of my genius; it represents a fox killing a fowl, and notwithstanding that I have never seen a fox in my life, I think that it is so well painted that it must even appear speaking to you." "Oh, that is a fox," replied his visitor, somewhat astonished; "I have seen a few in my life, but I cannot say that I know much about them." "That I can see at a glance," said the painter, wishing to demonstrate to his visitor how little he understood of art; "my fox is a *sublime* fox; it has no relation with the ordinary representation of that animal. I can tell you further that I am highly esteemed here; as a proof of which I may say that every time I take a walk in the streets with my gold-braided hat, my red waistcoat, and plum-coloured suit, every one takes off his hat and gives me a respectful salute." Needless to say Wille did not leave his son to the tender mercy of such a person.

But the painter of Konigsberg was not alone in the sentiments he expressed. Art had in many respects fallen to a very low ebb, and the majority of painters were far too exalted to think of studying in the school of Nature. Chardin was one of the exceptions; he found nothing sublime except in Nature. It is said that he commenced to paint the wonderful interiors we know so well on account of a taunting speech of his friend Aved. It happened thus: Chardin went one day to Aved's studio and found the latter engaged in an altercation with a lady who wished to have her portrait painted by him, but did not wish to pay dearly for it. Chardin tried by means of gestures to induce his friend to accept the offer, but Aved, who had much more love of money than Chardin, refused to listen. The lady finally offered four hundred livres, but the painter did not think it enough, and let his would-be patroness go. As soon as the door was closed Chardin asked Aved his reason for refusing so good an offer. "Surely," he urged, "four hundred livres is not a bad sum to accept." "No," replied his friend, "if a portrait were easy to paint as a sausage." Chardin, to whose pictures the word sausage was intended to be applied, though naturally annoyed, kept his temper and

resolved to paint a picture containing a figure that he hoped would put Aved to shame. He painted his picture; Aved was surprised, if not shamed. Chardin by this means discovered his ability in a new direction, and from this time dates that marvellous series of interiors we know so well. The unlikelihood of the story being true is evident. It is much more likely that these interiors interested him from his very early years and that they also had as great an attraction for him as the still-life subjects he was so fond of painting.

The merits of Chardin as a portrait painter have perhaps not yet been fully appreciated. He has suffered in this respect from the circumstance that he lived in an age when brilliant superficialities were the order of the day, and his honest and unostentatious method caused him to be passed over in favour of others who did not possess a tithe of his genius. If any proof of his capability in this direction is needed the portrait of himself in pastel in the Louvre can be cited; this is worthy to rank beside the finest productions of Latour and Perronneau.

Chardin lived to a ripe old age, for he was ninety when he died on the 6th of December 1779. He had seen many changes during his life,

but he never varied his own standpoint. As his style had been founded upon truth in the first instance and he cared nothing for fashion and passing whims, he was enabled to pursue a steady and straightforward course. He was one of the most sincere workers France has produced, and his works will certainly be held in high esteem long after the emptiness of the greater number of his contemporaries has been recognised.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LATOUR AND PERRONNEAU

Till within the last few years those who devoted themselves to the study of French art were so engrossed with the mass of decorative painting which they found on every side that they hardly appreciated the superlative excellence of the two portrait painters to whose works we must now devote our attention—Latour and Perronneau. French art is now looked at from a different and better standpoint, and at the same time the works of those two great painters have been dealt with more seriously, with the result that a sincerity and a profundity, far in advance of their contemporaries, have been recognised in their works. Mere decoration or an all-absorbing feeling for grace was not their standard, though, as a matter of fact, both decoration and grace are attributes of their work, for they possessed in a superlative degree the Gallic sense of life; but they combined with it such a searching for truth and character as will

eventually raise them far above even Boucher and Fragonard in the estimation of those who have a feeling for that which is really of importance in art.

Maurice Quentin de Latour was born at Saint-Quentin on the 5th of September 1704. His family came originally from Laon. His father, who was a singer in the chapel royal, appears to have been in sufficiently easy circumstances to permit of his giving a good education to his three sons. The eldest was given a government post; the youngest entered the army; and the second became a painter. He profited little from the education offered him, being more engrossed with his pencil than anything else, and his father adopted the wise course of allowing him to pursue what appeared to be his natural bent. His first lessons were given by a drawing-master in his native town. Details of his early life are almost entirely wanting, but it is known that a disgraceful incident in connection with a young girl, who had come from Sens, and the resulting scandal caused Latour to precipitately quit Saint-Quentin and to go first to Rheims and afterwards to Cambray. The unpleasant experience he had just passed through, if we can believe the following anecdote, did

not deter him from getting himself into an embarrassing situation in Cambray. Here he made love to the wife of a shopkeeper. The husband, naturally very angry, forbade him the house. A suggestion was then made by the lady and acted on by Latour, who did not suspect that his friend might be acting in collusion with her jealous and revengeful husband. She proposed that Latour should be hauled up to her window in a basket. The artist, in his eagerness, fell into the trap, and was accordingly pulled up in the basket, but when it was half-way between the street and the window it stopped, and he was left there all night. To mount any higher was quite impossible, and the distance from the ground was too great to permit of his regaining the street. The next morning was market day, and Latour was exposed for some time to the jeers of the passers-by.

It is said that he came to England; but whether he did so, or, if he did, how long he stopped, or how he occupied himself, is not known. To insist too strongly upon the influence exercised by the works of Vandyck and Lely, which in England he would have had an opportunity of studying, as many writers have done, is assuming more than we can gather

from a study of his portraits. Latour was essentially a creative genius, looking at life from a purely original, but, at the same time, intensely French aspect, and if he learned anything from Vandyck and Lely, it must have been on the purely mechanical side; and even this he absorbed so completely, that we can discover neither in composition and presentment, nor in technique, any trace of the disciple.

Latour's first years in Paris were devoted to hard work and a long struggle for recognition. It was only in 1737 that he publicly exhibited for the first time, but from that time onward he stood out prominently before the world. He immediately rose to eminence, and his society was sought by that little group of men and women who were the creative spirits of perhaps the most brilliant, if the most vicious, century in French history.

One has only to stroll through the little gallery at Saint-Quentin, with its wonderful collection of his pastels, to be able to reconstitute the society he moved in and to see the people who attracted him most. There is a striking equality of technique to be observed; nevertheless, a few portraits stand out from the rest.

Independence of spirit, verging frequently on

the eccentric, was so marked a trait in his character that it might easily have got him into trouble. It is related, for instance, that Madame de Pompadour was anxious to have her portrait done by him. After much persuasion he was finally induced to gratify her, but on the express condition that he should remain alone and undisturbed with her during the sittings. He arrived according to his promise, and in accordance with his usual custom took off his coat and collar and put on a small cap in the place of his wig, which he hung on the candlestick. In the middle of the sitting the king entered, and his astonishment at the extraordinary spectacle caused Madame de Pompadour some amusement. Latour became angry, and turning to the lady reminded her that she had promised him that the door should remain closed during the whole of the sitting. He was proceeding to remove his cap when the king tried to persuade him to stop. "It is impossible for me to obey your majesty," replied the painter; "I will come back when madame is alone." He gathered up his jacket, wig, and other belongings, went into an adjoining room, dressed himself, and took his departure. He returned some days afterwards, however, upon receiving an assurance from the lady that he would be allowed to work

uninterruptedly. Upon the completion of the portrait the question of payment arose. Latour valued his work at 48,000 livres. Madame de Pompadour was naturally astonished at the exorbitance of the price, and sent the artist exactly half. Even then no reasonable person would have hesitated to say that he had been royally paid. Latour, however, felt very sore about the matter, and roundly abused what he called the meanness of the favourite to his fellow painters. Chardin, whose ideas of remuneration were on a much smaller scale, took him to task for his ingratitude and unreasonableness. "How much do you think all the pictures in Nôtre Dame cost, not forgetting that among them is one of Le Sueur's masterpieces?" Latour confessed that he did not know. "Well, calculate for yourself about forty pictures at 300 livres; that makes 12,000 livres, each artist in addition giving a small picture to the churchwardens." The pastellist saw the force of the argument and said no more.

Latour's relations with Rousseau were at one time very intimate, and he has left us one of the best portraits we have of that celebrated person. The artist appears to have come into contact with him at the opera, where both of them were in great

*Boucher* *Annan*

MADAME DE POMPADOUR

*(Edinburgh)*

favour with the numerous brilliant singers and dancers whose fame has come down to our own day. The charming Camargo, whose dancing captivated the hearts of the whole court, was not the least of the little band. Of her Latour left an exceedingly beautiful and refined pastel, which to-day is carefully preserved in the gallery at Saint-Quentin.

We owe Latour a debt of gratitude for these fine character studies, for without them we should be without some most important documents to reconstitute the life and history of the time. He gives us in painting the character of some of those who took part in the great comedy then being played, and in his portraits we have the man or woman with all their weakness or force thoroughly exposed. The sensuality of Camargo, the vivacity of Pompadour, the cynicism of Rousseau, each in turn is caught with unerring precision. Had Latour not lived, we should have had to be content with the pretty but nearly meaningless portrait of Camargo by Lancret, who, with his passion for grace and movement, brings out all the theatrical side of the dancer, whilst Latour, who had no apparent interest in movement, has shown us the woman. But of all the beauties with whom Latour was surrounded,

there was but one who held his affections for any considerable time—her name was Mary Fel, she was a native of Bordeaux, and her first appearance at the opera was made in 1734. She was then in her nineteenth year and, if we may judge from contemporary accounts and from her portrait by Latour, she was strikingly handsome. Her talent as a singer was far above the average, and she soon became a favourite and remained five-and-twenty years on the stage. She seems to have fascinated Latour from the start; and that her attractions evoked more than a passing infatuation was proved by the long years during which they remained on intimate terms. It is quite possible that in her he found the complement of his own nature. We are told that he had a nervous and somewhat erratic temperament, prone to spasms of discontent in which he was wont to vent his depression in complaining of the treatment of himself by others and in self-depreciation. Another phase of his character revealed itself in alternate outbursts of generosity, even prodigality, and of a nearness in money matters. He had, moreover, more than his share of vanity; he could not endure to hear any disparaging criticism of his work, whereas judicious adulation was a sure road to his favour. In common with

many another artist he abhorred the critic, treating him as a charlatan who had no right to his opinions, and as a person whose only quality was a possession of unlimited impudence. Latour, however, took life seriously, and occasionally strayed away into the realms of philosophy, in which it cannot with truth be said that he was successful. In a word, he can be held to have had in a marked degree what is called in modern jargon the artistic temperament. Such a person not infrequently requires a counteracting influence to hold him in check if he is not to be overwhelmed by his temperament. There is little reason to doubt that Mary Fel in this way was just the person to direct Latour. His family even appreciated her power for good over him, and not only received her kindly in consequence but kept up a constant correspondence with her.

She lived in the closest intimacy with Latour till 1784, when consideration of health led him to quit Paris for his native Saint-Quentin. The separation was hard, but was accomplished with a delicacy but too rarely manifested under such conditions. His furniture and pastels, which he allowed to remain with her, she jealously treasured to the end of her life. Her touching letters, written for the most part to his brother,

show her to have had striking womanly qualities, and that they were never married, owing to differences of religion, seems the only blot on a perfect union. Latour did not return to Saint-Quentin in the disgrace in which he had left it as a boy. His native place had heard of his success, and was proud to own him as its son. The friend of Voltaire and Rousseau, of d'Alembert and Diderot, should receive a worthy welcome. The entire population quitted work; a public fête was declared; amidst the thundering of cannon and the ringing of bells the mayor, at the head of the municipal body, repaired to his house and presented him with an oak crown in public recognition of his merit. It must have been a proud day for the old artist and have helped to soften his distress at leaving Paris.

The health of Latour steadily declined. He lost his old vigour of thought; the strain of life had been too much for him. In these days he began to doubt the wisdom and truth of his early agnosticism, and even expressed a wish to make his peace with the Church. There was no hope from the first of a thorough recovery; his health steadily declined, and he died on the 17th of February 1788.

The complete change of feeling that set in, in

the early days of the Directory, caused the work of Latour to be neglected and abused. In common with all the men of his time, he fell under the ban of the school which was then directing the artistic energies of France. Even when the revival took place, and his contemporaries were steadily coming into their own again, Latour remained under a cloud. His works did not possess the decorative charm of those of Boucher and Watteau. His portraits were regarded rather as of historical value. Now this attitude is changing, and students of the French school are recognising that he is one of the greatest of French portrait painters. Had he left nothing but that wonderful group of studies in the museum of Saint-Quentin he would be entitled to a foremost place in this branch of art.

Of Latour's great contemporary, John Baptist Perronneau, our information is much more scanty; and until quite recently he could only be said to have taken a very subordinate place in the history of French art. But recent exhibitions have proclaimed him a master who is quite the equal and occasionally the superior of Latour. Formerly he was chiefly known as an engraver, and his prints after Bouchardon, Boucher, and

van Loo are familiar to most collectors. To the rigid training he underwent under the engraver Laurent can be ascribed the wonderful power of draughtsmanship he developed. Perronneau's chief claim to fame is founded upon his portraits in pastel and oil, many of which were practically unknown a few years since.

He was born in 1731 and died in 1796. It is probable that he was induced to devote a considerable amount of attention to pastel by the example of Rosalba and Latour. The former came to Paris in 1720 with her mother and her two sisters, and stayed there for nearly a year. Her reputation had preceded her; upon her arrival in the French capital she was received with great cordiality, and was soon overwhelmed with commissions. Amongst the portraits she executed were those of the young Louis XV, of the regent, and of many of the French aristocracy. The patronage she received from the collectors of the time was most flattering. Such men as Crozat, Mariette, and the Comte de Caylus were amongst her most ardent admirers; and Watteau was so appreciative of her talent that he exchanged one of his own works for a pastel by her.

The success of Rosalba's and Latour's pastels

*Perroneau* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF A GIRL

*(Louvre)*

doubtless induced Perronneau to adopt the same medium for many of his portraits. But in place of the mere prettiness of Rosalba, he brings out the character of his sitter to the full. Looking at a fine portrait by him, one forgets the means by which he arrived at his end in the splendour of the performance. Even more remarkable are the few portraits in oil we have from his hand. The two portraits which were exhibited at the Jeu de Paume in 1909 showed him to be a master of the first rank; and it would not be too much to say that no Frenchman has succeeded in delineating character with greater force. It is only to be regretted that we know so little of his life.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## FRANÇOIS LEMOINE

### 1688–1737

FRENCH decorative painting, from Louis XIV across the Regency to Louis XV, had had to pick its steps. The tradition of Versailles, embodied by Le Brun, had passed gently down the slope all men and schools must take whose tissues, through lack of sap and sustenance, decay. The heroic stature of Le Brun had shrunk in Jouvenet to a certain virility; in Louis de Boullogne the heroism of the style was so *dilué* as indeed to be insipid; in Antoine Coypel it was a joke. The impetus, in short, of the machine, augmented by no motor, simply had run down. Decorative painting, then, falling surely down the stream, was caught up in a cross current and diverted into a fresh course. From Watteau and his inspiration the cross current sprang, and, though in turn its force, renewed by no fresh tributaries, became weakly spent, yet, in the reign of Louis XV, it changed the face of French decorative art.

The face we say deliberately, because the spirit was not thus affected.

Of the decaying school of historical or classic painting the visible signs were dark tonality and dramatic oppositions. Almost entirely its functions had dwindled to the ecclesiastic ; its final exponents were Louis de Boullogne and Antoine Coypel.

François Lemoine, in distinction from Coypel, stood for the new movement. Put briefly, his contribution to the progress of French painting was the adaptation of Watteau's, Pater's, and Lancret's scheme of colours and tonality to decorative purposes on a large scale. He makes a sort of industrious to the idle apprentice of Jean François de Troy, his vanquished rival. Their rivalry, their practical identity of aim, and undoubted distinction link them together, though in temperament they were poles apart. Our industrious apprentice was born in Paris in 1688, of a mother whose second husband was the Académicien Tournières. Accommodated thus considerately with one *in loco parentis*, who not only tolerated his artistic leanings but actually directed them, Lemoine is one of the luckily rare cases of a painter who denies his biographers "copy" on harshly philistine fathers, and copy-books or office ledgers adorned with brilliant

surreptitious sketches. At thirteen years he passed from his stepfather's to Galloche's instruction; and Galloche was the rector of the Academy. In that institution thus he entered upon his career of industry, amazing his preceptors, and in 1711 gaining the Grand Prix de Rome. Owing to the war, however, he could not take his due and go to Italy, having to wait for that till 1724. Between 1711 and this latter date he seems to have accomplished a surprising amount. In his inaccurate and sketchy biography of our painter, d'Argenville in this period notes the attraction for him the fresh qualities and *airs de tête* of Carlo Maratti and Guido had. But it is unlikely he became acquainted with these painters before he went to Rome. One other incident d'Argenville recites, in which Lemoine, while making drawings from some bas-relief, was overcome by the fumes of a stove, and but for the assistance of his friends had perished.

The promising student of the Académie quickly won a reputation. In 1717 a painter of Amiens handed on to him a commission for nine decorations from the Gardiens des Cordeliers of Amiens. For these nine paintings 1500 livres were agreed upon as price, and at Amiens Lemoine completed three in that same year.

Another four he sent from Paris three years later. Having, however, been admitted a member of the Academy in 1718, it may have occurred to him that he was worth a larger fee; at any rate, for the two pictures that would complete the nine he demanded another 1500 livres. Messieurs les Gardiens, on the other hand, were not sufficiently impressed by his new dignity, and refused fresh payment. So, d'Argenville concludes, the artist kept his pictures, "which now" (and this, considering the writer's date, sounds curious) "are in America."

Meanwhile he was engaged upon decorating the choir vault of the Church of the Jacobins, in the Faubourg St Germains. Thus taxed, he seems to have felt somewhat at a disadvantage, owing to his disappointment over the Italian visit. A rich amateur, in 1724, offering to take him on that journey, was closed with eagerly. In Italy he stayed no longer than six months, in which space, as usual, he packed a vast production. The things we learn that struck him most were the Sixtine Chapel, the decorations of Piero da Cortona and Lanfranco, and the pulpit of St Peter's. He contented himself, face to face with these masters, with earnest examination, and on every occasion as they travelled would have

the carriage stopped to take this view or that. From this we might infer that he took notes of landscape and architectural material, though of pictures he made, expressly we are told, no copies. The fruits of this six months' tour increased his fame and reputation for unceasing application. Commissions for important works gave him no intervals; as soon as he had finished his decorations in the Jacobins he was busy working on the cupola of the Virgin's Chapel at St Sulpice. The three years this took him also brought him to his well-known competition with de Troy.

"Pour ranimer les Arts" the king was offering a prize of 1000 crowns for the best decorative painting. This immediately was taken for a duel between Lemoine and de Troy, who, embittered by the former's remarkable success as compared with his own unsought-for offices, already was the centre of a sort of boudoir intrigue to undermine his rival. Party feeling ran extremely high; both principals, it was said, made no bones about conspiring with their factions for influential favour. So effectually they moved and countermoved that the prize was divided equally, and each tasted an insipid victory. Lemoine felt his real supremacy was

not appreciated; de Troy that his was not established. As for the rather dazed Académiciens, they, now that party prejudice had ebbed, looked ruefully about among the pictures of the other competitors, induced by the mediocrity of the successful twain to wonder why some one else had not succeeded.

If this particular trial of strength had ended up in smoke, the royal favour was not long in singling out for patronage Lemoine. For the Palace of Versailles he painted first "Louis XV giving Peace to Europe," and then his colossal decoration of the Salon d'Hercule, a really fine accomplishment, in which, as Lady Dilke has said, his mission was achieved. Completed in 1736, its success with the king and court was absolute. It threw the rest of Versailles, they said, into the shade. But not its fame, and not his pension; nor yet his advancement to the post of Premier Peintre in the place, quite cold by now, of Louis de Boullogne, might avail Lemoine. His industry had now to settle with outraged nature; the morals of our stories seem to have been mixed. In 1730 Lemoine had married the sister of Steemart, the Académicien; midway through his Salon d'Hercule she left him widower, cruelly stricken. Sternly he pursued

his work, toiling, it is said, by lamplight even; no sooner had he finished the four years' unaided labours at Versailles than he was engaged in fresh; true to his industrious career. It could not, of course, go on. Overworked since thirteen years of age, deaf to all warnings from violated nature, he stretched the strings some turns too tightly. A dark, suspicious melancholy fell on him; he took to morbid brooding; he went in terror of the constables. Naturally of an incertain and over self-conscious temper, now he was the victim of mad apprehensions. De Caylus was with him his last evening, as he finished up "Time revealing Truth," now in Hertford House. When his visitor had left, he begged his little cousin, Mlle. Lefranc, to sit with him; who knows what terrors the lone inaction of the night thrust out at him? Next morning early he made his professional visit to his students, by whom, for his kindness and ever-ready desire to help, he was greatly liked. Then, rising from the breakfast-table, he took his girl kinswoman by the hand, bowed as in those days they could, and said smilingly, "Allons, dansons." When by appointment Berger, his friend, a little later knocked at his room, he was denied ingress. Importuning and apprehensive at last he was

admitted, to find Lemoine dying. In the fury of his desperate fear he had given himself, they said, nine wounds. He had, as the king's Premier Peintre, reached the top of the ladder in 1736; now, in 1737, he was dead.

Though we need not subscribe to the opinions of his pre-eminence in those days held, to which we know Voltaire liberally contributed, still we must admit the considerable style and position he accomplished. Yet more indisputable is his importance as shedding on French Decorative Painting *le ton lumineux et rose*, that replaced the heavy drama of effect, and reached in his pupil —Boucher—a conspicuous beauty.

# CHAPTER XIX

## JEAN FRANÇOIS DE TROY

### 1679–1752

FROM Lemoine, the king's Premier Peintre and honoured decorator, in almost every trait de Troy remarkably differed. Against the former's successful industry and painfully overburdened life he set his own more indolent and brilliant talent, and his long tale of years passed pleasantly in sumptuous ways. In 1679, the son of François de Troy, the Académicien and portraitist, he was born, in Paris. Under his rather *étroit* father's instruction he rapidly developed. It is said that by his fifteenth year his capability might fairly have taken him to Rome. De Troy *père*, however, deemed it better to keep the precocious youth yet longer—a retention that the incorrigible fascination of his son at length cut short. Before he was twenty, *une affaire* made it expedient that he should travel. Here in his biography first we touch his remarkable personality. He seems, indeed, to have been worthy

of inclusion in Stevenson's short list of Michelangelo and Goethe, as the only men known to him who really might justify a woman's surrender. The rest of us, that witty writer thought, were but anæmic tailors' dummies. To Rome, then, in 1699, de Troy went, amused and supercilious, conspicuous for his air of candour, gallantry, and breeding. There he worked, more or less assiduously, for some three years. It is illustrative of his particular taste that Guercino, one of the best of the eclectic and Naturalist school, most amused him. Summoned homewards by his father, who in his position as bill-payer was justified in calling the tunes, our young gentleman strolled leisurely through Italy. By the time he was at Florence the paymaster's patience was at an end, his purse-strings tightly drawn. But against this mishap the young artist's personal charm was fruitful of defence. First the French envoy at Florence, and later a total stranger—a Pisan gentleman—found themselves most honoured in affording him every lavish hospitality. For two years at Pisa, with the latter, he remained, indulged gladly in every whim. And as in questions of hospitality, so it was in others. We hear of his attachment to the young and lovely Signora Joanna, whose old husband, fallen

too beneath the artist's brilliant spell, seems to have held himself privileged in extending an unlimited acquiescence. Having thus exigently sipped his way through Italy, in 1706 he returned to his exasperated father, whom, his biographer remarks, he found given entirely up to portraiture, an unusual form of specialisation at that time.

Bearing his recollections of Guercino and the other masters of the classic school in mind, de Troy sat down to historical painting, only to rise in a short time and take to portraiture. For patronage, at this date, of the grand style was very limited; Watteau and his school had intercepted it. Moreover, we are given to suspect that his own shortcomings, typical of the idle apprentice, told against him. Bored with his work, or at least more amused by the pleasant ways of life, he would permit in it surprising inequalities, which, his biographer insists, were due to a lack of serious concentration rather than to technical defects. That he was able, when he liked, to work remarkably is indisputable from the evidence we have. In 1708 he submitted a picture of "Niobe and her Children," in their well-known predicament, to the Académie, and on it was *agréé*. The same year he

was received a member. Further, we learn that he had a chance of honourable distinction in decorating the Senate at Genoa—a chance his father took from him by demanding his presence in his studio. So to portraiture he gave himself in this period, and to the careful study he devoted to this branch he owes, no doubt, the high pitch of technique and truth to Nature he attained. His biographer maintains that from this exactitude arises what he suggests is a too prosaic quality in him—a sort of literalness that has no connection with enthusiasm or genius. To us, however, such pictures as "The Surprise" in the Victoria and Albert Museum, or the "Bathsheba" at Angers, the "Déjeûner d'Huîtres" at Chantilly, his portrait of "Sylvia" at Welbeck, and especially the large "Plague at Marseilles," convey qualities finer than this, mere truthful imitation, by their large way of seeing that betokens imaginative individuality.

By 1719 de Troy was elected professor at the Académie. In the guise of drawing-master he was able to insinuate himself into the family of the Deslandes, with the object of acquiring the hand and dowry of their daughter. With all his charm and breeding, and that fastidious tone which makes his biographer explain that what-

ever his amours yet always one feels he picked and chose with a sensitive palate, he could have had no difficulty in this. The girl, though only nineteen, was dazzled by the offer, and her proud family, used as they were to think of painters as mere artisans, succumbed to his invincible distinction. From his easy, pleasure-loving life, the prominent success of his junior, Lemoine, spurred him to competition. On the celebrated rivalry for the king's prize in 1727 already we have touched. Coming out of that contest with negative honour, he vigorously turned to decorative works; in the ensuing years he achieved some thirty-two *dessus de porte* for M. de la Live, and others for the wealthy banker Bernard. True to his especial character, we hear that in the houses of these patrons he was considered as a prince of pleasure-lovers. None the less, however, he found it difficult to live; or rather all the more. His solution of the difficulty somehow strikes us as undignified and mean; for, recognising the standard market value of designs for the Gobelins' looms, and calculating on his extraordinary rapidity of working, unscrupulously he offered the factory designs at a reduction of 1000 livres. For them he started, in 1737, "The History of Esther" and "The Triumph

of Mordechai." The next year he took up at Rome the post of Director of the French Académie that Vleughels had just laid down, and at Rome his considerable talent bloomed into a second summer. Kindled by his environment, he produced perhaps his finest work. He completed the designs for the Gobelins' "History of Esther," and for the king and for the factory designed a series of "Jason and Medea." Incomparably admired in the artistic world of Rome, after declining the honour, he was elected Prince of the Academy of Saint Luke.

But now the hand of adversity seized on him, taking in 1741 two of his sons. Next year it wrung from him his wife and their remaining son. Mme. de Troy had filled in her husband's life a rarely valuable place. Not only had she by her distinction added to his social splendour, but also by her influence she could restrain his indiscretions, or, at the worst, save his name by her generous tact. Left to himself, deprived of one he had dearly loved and respected, he attempted, it is said, to find alleviation of his loss, and succeeded only in achieving the ridiculous. Embittered by these things, disgusted with Rome, he applied to Paris for recall. For years they refused definitely to grant his appeal, putting him

off on the assumption he might change his mind. Then came the final bitter cup. For years, as Caffieri has it, during his wife's life he had been at least discreet, and in the ten years he had passed in Rome after her death nothing serious in the form of an attachment had laid hold on him. But now, in 1752, in his seventy-fourth year, the fire broke out. Intensely passionate and proud, he became infatuated with a young and handsome Roman lady. To him, in his soured and melancholy age, she became the only thing that counted. While with her at the play, news reached him that at last from Paris M. Natoire had come to relieve him of his office. Enraged and mortified, as probably none but so proud and old a man could be, he lingered on in Rome, desperately clinging to the slipping days. On the eve of sailing he fell severely ill, and in a week the French Academy at Rome was mourning him. On his students, as indeed on all who met him, he exercised that same high charm. From what we can make of them, his principles of instruction were liberal and fine. To a study of the antique he urged his pupils, warning them to extract from it the beautiful spirit rather than to copy slavishly the forms. Chivalrous and courteous, with an air of frank dignity he would

go among them seeking to incite them to high thoughts. In stature he was tall, and built on graceful, well-knit lines, with fair colouring, a lofty forehead, and aquiline nose. It was remarked by those who could compare them that his head fittingly was that of the Christ in his painting of "The Agony in the Garden."

As at the touch of Watteau a new genre was born in France, so under the brushes of Lemoine and de Troy a new mode of decoration was accomplished. Over the worn-out mythologic themes a fresh scheme of tone and colour was spread, that in a very little time would degenerate into frivolous superficiality.

# CHAPTER XX

## CARLE VAN LOO

### 1705–1765

No small portion of the annals of the French Academy is occupied with the jealousies and heart-burnings that heaved and bubbled round the exalted seat of the king's Premier Peintre. The rivalry of Lemoine and de Troy, as we have seen, was settled by the former's fairly final triumph. And at his tragic end in 1737, when he had enjoyed his post about one year, de Troy seemed to see so little prospect of succeeding him that he went to Rome next year as President of the French Academy—a sort of Colonial Governorship into which were fitted awkward or disappointed officials. To Natoire this seemed highly lucky; all he had to do was to inflate his already considerable reputation. In short, he struck spectators as a likely first, if we may employ that sporting figure. He was, however, as fortunate as de Troy before him; extending our licence, we may add that an outsider, Charles

ALLEGORY

*(By Natoire. In the collection of Monsieur le Comte Robert de Montesquieu)*

Antoine Coypel (son of Antoine Coypel, who, too, had held the dignity), won surprisingly. In 1747, ten years since Lemoine's vacation of the lofty post, he was appointed Premier Peintre. For five years he filled it, and then died; and yet again the disappointed Natoire stepped in de Troy's tracks. Finding it a hopeless business, even when Coypel was dead, he went off to Rome, as we may remember, to relieve the discontented, aged de Troy. The field thus was clear for the rivalry, friendly, and on the loser's part no doubt amused, of Boucher and Carle van Loo.

Before we investigate the reasons for the latter's success it might be well to inquire into his record and achievement. He had not done badly for himself in starting life some twenty years his brother's junior. Jean Baptiste van Loo was a painter of considerable parts—a Fleming, born at Aix in 1684. For considerable prosperity his was, however, too roving a nature, and into his Academic shoes, one might almost say, his young brother slipped while he was, in 1738, investigating some enterprise in London. This Carle van Loo was born at Nice in 1705, and assisted, it is said, in a cellar in his cradle at the Siege of Aix. A shell, penetrating to his depth, is alleged to

have had the discrimination to burn the cradle without affecting Master Carle. This, for a beginning, runs Eugène Delacroix closely. Aged nine, he was taken by Jean Baptiste to Rome, and put with Luti, the painter, and Legros, the sculptor, until the latter's death in 1719. To Paris then the brothers went, under the patronage and in the hôtel of the Prince de Carignan. As his senior's assistant, and used as from his celebrated cradle he had been to execution, his facility became remarkable; in 1724, aged nineteen, he took the Prix de Rome. Jean Baptiste's and his own commissions kept him busy until 1727, when, with Boucher and his nephew Michel, he went down to Rome, giving there remarkable promise and satisfaction. Some three years later he returned as far as Toulon, and took up there work for the Duc de Savoie, marrying incidentally the singer Christine Sommis, "La Philomèle d'Italie," with whom lies the distinction of having introduced into France the Italian method of singing. In 1734 we hear of him helping his brother in the restoration of the Primaticcio gallery at Fontainebleau.

At this moment Lemoine was carrying to its issue his gigantic task in the Salon d'Hercule, at Versailles; when it was accomplished in '36

and its author made Premier Peintre, no doubt our Carle took careful stock of the new thing in tone and colour it had introduced. In the same way he paid particular attention to the lesson conveyed, eleven years later, by the appointment as Premier Peintre of Charles Antoine Coypel; for this appointment obviously pointed out that to be successful in official ways you must not ignore the good old traditions of the Académie, of which, as opposed to Boucher, Coypel was the uninspired exponent. By now, we must remember, van Loo had accumulated a certain Academic prestige, which he was assiduous in fostering. His success commensurately throve; he was made, in 1750, Chevalier de St Michel. Nor must we suppose that he deserved the utter scorn for which, with Boucher, he came in at the hands of the Davidians. With them the word "vanloter," signifying to work with slipshod insincerity, was the last drop of acid scorn. Curiously, too, they fastened on van Loo as the chief offender, when as a fact he was, though duller, much less unworthy than Boucher. His design was firmer and more simple, his painting finer in quality; and in examples such as "The Hunt Breakfast," in which he successfully left Olympus for the forests of Versailles

and modern life, he attained a considerable refinement and quality. His mythologics are a sort of compromise between his own Flemish stolidity and the insipid restraint of the degenerate Academic traditions on the one hand, and the verge to which Boucher was pushing things. Lacking any especial emotion of his own to inspire him, he practised an impartial eclecticism: now Guido with a touch of Raphael, now a limping approach towards Correggio. At one time only, we are told, and then under the cruel grip of a bitter loss, was he forced to some personal expression—after, that is, his daughter's death.

In the meanwhile Coypel had died, in '52, and the time was running on with no one yet exalted to his place. To his credit van Loo had an exemplary Academic record; punctual and regular attendances at all transactions, and besides no sort of scandal in his private conduct. Boucher's credit side was not embarrassed by either of these assets. But though van Loo recognisedly was the proper man to grace the vacant seat, the king's purse was too lean to support immediately on one Premier Peintre another. So for ten years Carle waited, and when in '62 the king installed him in the gorgeous chair, the consummation of success, and the artist tried to thank

THE PICNIC

*(By Carle Van Loo. The Louvre)*

him, he was bidden not to mention it, "since you have been my Premier Peintre a long time." The king liked his little joke about his painters. When that tactless person Latour took it on him to inquire of his Majesty why he had no "*marine*," alluding to the scandalous condition of the fleet, Louis drily answered: "What do you mean? Haven't I got Vernet?"—who in that hour was at the top of his reputation for sea-scapes.

Thus, then, in 1762 Carle van Loo was Premier Peintre, and next year Director of the Academy. He could have mounted no higher, even had not a stroke just two years later killed him. Boorish and illiterate (he could not read nor write); as a diner-out at Mme. Geoffrin's intensely dull, and in speech only at his ease in the jargon of his trade, yet he inspired in all a sincere affection. When, convalescent from an illness, he again was able to go one night to the opera the house rose at him and clapped. In his domestic life, where he was most at home and warmly loved, he makes for us an agreeable homely figure. The great pride of his life was his daughter Caroline, who, in addition to her mother's gifts as singer, had a remarkable beauty. Of her Carle made a constant studio companion. While he worked

she would sit and read, a practice fraught with danger to her uneducated father's eyes, and though she was untrained he had implicit faith in her instinctive liking or dislike of his work. But unhappily she seems to have suffered from some obscure decline that robbed her of all vitality and inclination to do more than brood and read. One day, the story goes, she came into the empty studio, and as it were unconsciously began to draw upon a canvas. Her father entering quietly came up to watch. To his awe he found she was sketching in a symbolic figure of Death, endowed with her own face. He could not bear it, and breaking in with some forced jest, made as though the girl had faultily begun. "Look here," he said, "we begin like this." Quickly he wiped out the grim trappings of La Morte, leaving only his daughter's features. These, with his accustomed hand, he decked out with all the panoply of L'Amour. "There you are," he cried; "that's it, isn't it?" But she, gently smiling at him, shook her head. That day, the tale goes on, she fell grievously ill, and for days lay delirious. Van Loo, taking no rest, sat by her bed, "praying for the first time in his life." Years later, it is recorded, the dauphin met him at some brilliant function dressed in black.

"Vous êtes en deuil?" asked the prince. "Yes; for my daughter," the painter told him. Of a vast reputation, patronised, one might say, by all the crowned heads of Europe, persistently he refused ennoblement. "Carle van Loo," he always said, "c'est assez."

# CHAPTER XXI

## FRANÇOIS BOUCHER

### 1703–1770

In the chain of French art that stretches from Watteau, its beginning, to Fragonard, the end of it, Boucher links Lemoine his master to his pupil Frago. While Watteau in full measure and Fragonard in shorter had that elusive quality we call genius, Lemoine was industriously sincere and not untalented. His pupil, François Boucher, was very talented, but of no marked originality or personal expression. His actual contribution to Art, in short, was small. Indeed, the most liberal eulogy his devotees can find is that he thoroughly represents his age, which in the circumstances *n'est pas grande chose.* To illuminate our next remark if we quote a recent writer[1] we shall not be tedious: "If Unity may be said to give a picture coherent structure, Vitality to inspire it with the breath of life, Infinity to redeem it from shallowness, Repose may be said to endow it with

[1] Professor C. J. Holmes, "Notes on the Science of Picture-Making."

*Boucher* *Photo. Moreau*

DIANA

*(Louvre)*

good manners." If Watteau, then, may be said to include all these conditions or ingredients, and Fragonard at his least satisfactory to lack but one—Infinity, Boucher may be held rarely to combine more than two of them. When he has coherent structure and Vitality, the chances are that Infinity has been mislaid, good manners overlooked. If he have the first, the second, and the last, the third's absence probably is felt. When, on the other hand, he fairly can be credited with the expression of this quality of mystery, each of the others will be there. But, we need not say, his appearance as our creditor in this respect is rare—a fact that causes no surprise in us. For after all it is inevitable that a man's expression should express himself, even as from a bottle will only pour its contents.

Boucher is the capital example of this oneness of an artist's art with his moral and mental taste. Diderot, who in many ways was a sound critic and no doubt of ripe experience, in this matter hits the nail's head. "What," he asks, "should this man paint save what he conceives in his imagination? And what can he conceive who spends his life in company of women of the town? Truth of vision of course he never had; innocence, refined grace, and simplicity are perfectly un-

known to him." Stripped of all scaffolding, Art is but that—the revelation of a taste. Another critic of his circle puts it in another way—a way we promptly label as "so French." "M. Boucher's heroines, his goddesses, his nymphs and shepherdesses, would make most charming mistresses, but one wouldn't care to choose one's wife *chez lui*. To achieve brilliance, M. Boucher overshoots the mark; forcing his lights, he makes them 'spotty.' Thus he dazzles, but offends our eyes." Herein, then, we find summed up not only our painter's ideal woman type, but also the depravity of his pictorial taste.

And if Diderot's and M. de Sainte Yves' opinions may be fairly said to characterise the impression Boucher's art made on a none too squeamish set of worldlings, the "Memoirs" of Marmontel seem to register not incompatibly the sort of figure as a man he cut. Apropos of the artists one met at Mme. Geoffrin's, the man of letters notes that as a rule they are strikingly deficient in general culture. Van Loo was a common fellow, Latour a pretentious bore. As for Boucher, he, though gifted with a certain imagination, was insincere and coarse. "His Venuses and Madonnas are mere chorus-girls, and his conversation, like his work, smacks of the model

throne and the atmosphere of his atelier." Thus, then, he struck others as a painter and a diner-out. It were interesting, if we might, to learn what was his own view of his artistic success.

As it happens, he seems to have recorded this in what we may consider his epitaph on his still-born genius. The story is too well known to need elaboration. When but a youth, in the undimmed glow of promise, as deeply as he could he experienced a pure passion. The little *fruitière*, Rosette, revealed to him in himself a reverence that must have surprised him, who even then was used to other things. Inspired by this reverent love and the singular purity of her beauty, he painted from her the head of a Madonna, into which he put an unsuspected depth of feeling. But while yet it was unfinished, he turned aside in his light way to seize another sort of fruit. From that quest, when sickened of his booty, he came back remorsefully to the unfinished canvas. Again amazed at the profundity of his expression, in a gust of penitence and inspiration he yearned to take it to a worthy end. But in the interval his love, little more than a child, had gained silently the Inaccessible for Boucher, who thus was left with his arrested genius gazing from the canvas.

The key was lost, and when in later years genial friends rummaging in his studio would stop before the unfinished picture of the Virgin, Boucher, it is recorded, gruffly would forbid discussion of what recalled to him the hour his genius died.

He was born in Paris, in September 1703, when Watteau was turning out by heart his stock "St Nicolas." Son of a painter, he was quickly put into the business of the engraver Cars, to whom he seemed worth sixty francs a month and board and bed. *Chez* Cars *père* was Laurent Cars, the son, who afterwards was Boucher's chief engraver. In 1721 from Boucher's drawings Cars engraved some twenty-six plates for a History of France. Intent on becoming a painter, soon after this the young man entered Lemoine's atelier. To that master his debt was great—a fact, undoubtedly, he recognised, since he took pains to deny it, hoping in his cheap vanity to pass as one of those who spring up ready armed. If, of course, Lemoine had been incompetent to teach him anything he would have boasted of it, instead of alleging that he only spent with him a month or so. On this point, however, his pictures are the clearest evidence; in them, from 1723 until about 1737,

Lemoine's influence is marked. In the former year he gained the Prix de Rome; but, like his master before him, owing to the needy state of the Academic purse, he could not go to Rome.

Remaining in Paris, he picked up here and there a living, easily. From that distinguished amateur, M. de Julienne, came his chance of assimilating the second large ingredient of his artistic composition. Watteau had been dead about four years, and his patron was looking round for one to whom to confide the task of engraving his collection of the Master; Boucher struck him as the man, and fell in with his offer of twenty-four francs a day. Of course we know how pedestrian in comparison was Boucher's talent; indeed, nothing so points out his limitations as an inspection of his drawings, which often give us of his best, side by side with Watteau's. Granting the decorative largeness of his style and the masterly assurance of his line, yet how dull and literal his drawings are beside the Infinity of the other's. His could be copied, Watteau's could not. However this may be, there is no doubt that technically, and to some extent, in spirit, he was vastly benefited by these exercises. In all, they say, he engraved 125 plates, in addition to his etchings. From the

Fêtes Champêtres he turned his hand to drawings for religious illustrations, apparently hitting off in this respect the day's popular taste.

At this moment, in 1727, young van Loo, with whom in after years Boucher stood, as one might say, in the dock before the Davidian tribunal and received a heavy sentence, was starting for Rome, having, in 1724, gained the Prix. With him went Boucher, for a joke we may suppose, since he made the smallest use of Italy. What little he did was done from Piero da Cortona and Luca Giordano, and he may have thrown a glance at the pastorals of Benedetto Castiglione. Reaching Rome, he struck the head of the French Academy as a simple, clever youth, and was put up, for lack of space, "in a cupboard of a room." In his sketches from the antique he strove to mitigate his boredom by drawing the marbles as though they were alive. Herein we note that Boucher, with a sort of butterfly's attention, managed to solve a problem that David, with his prodigious solemnity, never could. Back in Paris in 1731, he entered upon the first of his three marked periods. In this, which M. Mantz, with his careful study, has distinguished, he shows a little of Piero de Cortona with a lot of Lemoine. Indeed, certain examples of this date

until recent years passed for the latter's work. With the niceties of technique which mark off the first period we must not concern us, but at another feature of it we may pause. For this is the portrait, in pictures of the 1730's, of his wife. Despairing of less elaborate means, and "although marriage is scarcely in my line," in 1733 he married Marie Jeanette Buzeau, a girl of seventeen. We remember noticing somewhere recently a sort of prurient licking of the lips over the fact that Boucher drew and painted from his wife's figure. Recalling how reasonable, natural, and precedented this occurrence was, we cannot but wonder that such an attitude towards the nude in Art should be perpetuated in the guise of criticism. Mme. Boucher, one gathers, died in 1740, at the birth perhaps of her third child. She is one to whom our human sympathies run out no less than to her daughters, Jeanne Elisabeth and Marie Emilie, born in 1735 and 1740; for it is not likely that many wives and daughters can have been much more unsatisfactorily accommodated with husband and father than were these. To the daughters, moreover, our debt of sympathy would seem yet greater, since at the ages of twenty-two and eighteen simultaneously they were delivered over in marriage to Deshays and

Baudouin, their father's pupils. Than these young gentlemen, it is said, Boucher could not well have found two men cut more closely to his own pattern. However, his daughters' lots were no doubt alleviated when, by 1770, were removed, first their husbands and then their parent—all equally worn out by a too rapid motion. For the hearth must uniquely be the place where genius (which none of these three had) is no set-off to selfishness, and where no sort of brilliance can dazzle long enough beautifully to clothe, in golden haze, the animal.

But to revert to the first period of Boucher's *œuvre*. While for its colour scheme it drew upon Lemoine, in the matter of its almost extravagant employment of arabesque design it took from Meissonier—the great exponent in furniture decoration of the rococo. Were this the place it would be interesting to track our painter through the various patterns he affected; noting his upward course towards a simpler, firmer structure, that took him to really considerable decoration, relying rather on straight lines, and thence seeing him in the late fifties declining to the indolent flamboyance and weak spirals that cost no effort. Not that it is uninteresting to us, occupied as we are in con-

sidering the character of our artist. For it makes out clearly, as does another point in his technique, that at one phase of his popularity he was conscientiously engrossed. It was this conscientiousness that prompted Diderot's opinion that Boucher was, as it were, traitor to himself.

With 1738 Boucher's first period, the Lemoinesque, was practically closed. In the Salons of '38 and '39 he exhibited the four *dessus de porte* he had executed for the Hôtel de Soubise, and with them revealed his own definite style, that is, in key rather than any other quality, quite a personal contribution. Briefly resolved, his contribution to what Lemoine had started was pitching that painter's colour scheme and tonality into a higher, silvery, and more sparkling key. The amounts given to the general fund of knowledge of flesh painting by Correggio and Rubens were, of course, on another scale. His success in '38 may be said to have set awhirl an eddy into which ultimately he was drawn, loosing his hold upon the conscientious ambition we have just mentioned. Oudry, the lessee of the Beauvais looms, now induced Boucher to make designs for his tapestries, and from Beauvais to the Gobelins was but a step, which he completely took in 1755. By that date he was well on the

slope that became so precipitate in the sixties. But in the forties we see him, and this is that other point of technicality, seriously occupied with processes, employing careful under-paintings, and working to a remarkable and perfect impasto; considering with science the values of silhouette, the nuances of outline, and as considerately filling in the masses. Therefore his second period, from 1739 till the mid or early fifties, contains his most sincere and finest output. We might just cite "La Naissance of Venus" at Stockholm, the Louvre "Diane sortant du Bain," the "Poésie Epique" of 1743, and others, such as the two *dessus de porte* in the Wallace Collection, in which a striving for firm pattern and silvery luminosity are marked. It is, apropos of his highly finished manner, interesting to note that he had a sliding scale of charges according to the finish.

Boucher's prosperity was really consummated when in 1750 he became Premier Peintre de Madame la Marquise de Pompadour, who was more opportune in securing him than was the king fifteen years later, when his talent was in its dotage. Madame's patronage was in some sort due to Oudry, who, busy on the decorations of her Château de Bellevue, introduced his Beauvais

*Latour* *Photo. Moreau*

MADAME DE POMPADOUR

*(Louvre)*

colleague. Not, of course, that Boucher was unknown by fame to the king's mistress; she must have seen his work in the monarch's rooms at Marly. Her first particular commission was, in M. Mantz's phrases, natural in *une reine de la main gauche*. She ordered for her chapel an altar-piece of the "Nativity." Our artist's early adaptability to religious subjects had been fairly consistently exercised and his versatility displayed by sundry excursions into the field of landscape and a whole-hearted delight in decorative ventures for the theatre. This latter work particularly appealed to the man and to the artist. But one does not feel in such pictures as "The Nativity," "The Assumption," or "St John the Baptist Preaching" his especial vocation lay. The worldly Diderot in 1759 comments on *une Vierge amoureuse*, and suggests the incompatibility in a subject like "The Nativity" of *un lit galant* beneath a canopy. As portraitist, however, though inadequate, our painter was more suited. In his renderings of his patroness, of which at South Kensington and Hertford House we have specimens, he just reaches an interpretation. Regarding these, or that portrait of Madame Pompadour by Drouais at Orleans, one is struck forcibly by a sort of gentle charm and "niceness,"

if we may use so poor a word. It is curious that in them, conceding the ingredient of flattery, no trace appears of the scheming siren nor of the revolting experience life must have given her. The king, unfortunate, corrupted man, could not have been amusing.

And for our idea of her painter we may refer to Roslin's portrait in 1760. We see him worn and out of condition, with eyes that seem to hint at sleepless nights and overburdened days. We know, in fact, of his arduous hours in the studio, all day long, and of his late hours o' nights passed in the endless quest of fresh amusement. No wonder that his days were over-full, with all the fashionable world knocking at his door, and his too exigent responsibilities as Director of the Gobelins. Lacking the conscience to remain an artist, he made no fuss about degenerating into a mere machine. By the day he could turn out, with almost mathematical precision, an unending succession of gods and nymphs, shepherds and gesticulating, baggy Cupids. Dulled as his artist's scruples were, yet we feel sure he must have loathed the whole of Olympus, whose interminable amours with goddesses or mortals kept him mechanically busy. To him the death in 1764 of Madame la Marquise made little

difference. Her good brother de Marigny sufficed to push him up into the seat left empty in 1765 by the king's Premier Peintre, Carle van Loo. Thus he was enthroned when, as all the world recognised, he was failing fast. Diderot lost no time in showing his appreciation of his weakness. At this date he wrote to Grimm the scathing analysis we have quoted, stigmatising the king's first painter as the worthless product of a worthless life. It is interesting to speculate whether Boucher or the other victims of Diderot's attacks were conscious of them; for they were not written for publication in Paris, being sent to Germany. Copies, however, were occasionally made, which must have circulated, though they made no apparent difference.

Home again from Flanders, whither he went in '66 as expert adviser to Randon de Boisset, Boucher for the next four years continued to present one of the most distressing spectacles, which in his case almost justifies Stevenson's famous analogy of the outworn artist and the faded *fille de joie*. In any case it is unpleasant to think of this broken and asthmatic roué, painfully and vainly seeking to allure with his grimacing *passé* art. A manlier man, one feels, had thrown it

up, but virility was hardly Boucher's cut. Like a ghost he moved about his world, a pathetic scandal.

One day in 1770 a student, knocking at his door, hastily was sent away. Among the litter of his memories, and with, no doubt, a clear appreciation of the proportions of things, he chose to see the curtain drop alone. One wonders if he pulled out from among his canvases that unfinished one of a Madonna, in which his genius died still-born.

Boucher represents, they say, his age; counting that for righteousness. But for an artist not to pass along the pavement with the crowd is better. Selfish, gross, and insincere; witty and weak; and with a sensuous love of beauty—he is fully reflected in his work: the production of a dandy. Distinguished from Watteau by his shallowness, beside Fragonard he seems anæmic. Whereas Chardin, Watteau, Fragonard, and, to a less degree, Lépicié, first and foremost were artists, translating the world they dealt with into pictorial language, Boucher let out his art to the service of Narration. And yet, as Diderot said fairly, he commands the respect of painters for the ease with which he surmounts technical difficulties, and for the undeniable beauty of

much in his finest period. It comes back, in fine, to where we started. Given a delicate and refined taste, Boucher had been a great artist.

# CHAPTER XXII

## FRAGONARD

1732–1806

THAN Boucher, the master manufacturer, his first and most penetrating influence, Jean Honoré Fragonard is indisputably the greater artist. At his name upon the chart of the French painters of the eighteenth century the line that has rapidly descended from the rare height where Watteau set it going, is seen to rise steadily almost up to that original altitude. Indeed, in his rarer moments, Fragonard stands on the same high platform as does Watteau. Head and shoulders from the ruck of his school he emerges, a fact that appealed to the implacable enemy of all that smelt of Boucher. For we must believe that sincerity as much as generosity directed Louis David in his choice of the term *un grand artiste* as definitive of the ruined Fragonard. But on the shoulders of our great artist, thus emerging, is clearly seen the vexing question that sticks tightly to his school; the question of what

balance can be struck between the substance and material of his art and the well-nigh perfect technical expression of them. For the *motifs* of his usual work almost all his critics and biographers are conscious of the propriety of apology, even as all agree upon the superb means that expressed them. The de Goncourts in their incomparable, effusive way, urge as mitigation, if indeed not clear acquittal, a sort of immaterial spiritual quality, of intention as of wonderful technique; for them Fragonard is "*un accoucheur de songes.*" M. Mauclaire, *pour lui*, thinks that he is rescued from a mediocrity "*alambiquée*" by the quality of his technique and the full-blooded sincerity of the passion reflected in his work. De Portales, on the other hand, to whose fine volume our debt is large, does not concern him with apologies. In the main he relishes impartially the *motif* and the means.

Fairly to weigh this business, an operation necessary to an understanding of the master's character, we should attempt to see what were his relations with his environment, what actually impelled his production of the body of his pictures, and wherein, concerning his artistry, lies his distinction from the Baudouins and Lavreinces.

Naturally to start with, and then by preliminary training, Fragonard was, artistically, a hedonist, with no solemn mission, no exacting conscience. Emphatically impelled by an instinctive artistry, deeply moved by beauty, able as few have been beautifully to interpret the rarest refinement, he spilt liberally his genius on purely frivolous, cheaply sensual, and often vulgar things and on things of infinite purity and price. Typical of his brilliant, plucky age, lovable and generous, he seemed a man who might by his great gifts have changed the history of French art, but who held Paris cheap at a mass.

Born in 1732, eleven years after Watteau's death, one after Boucher's election to the Academy, thus he was sixteen years the senior of his ultimate supplanter, David. His father was a glover in the Provençal town of Grasse. Beyond doubt his early life in that sunny place, and his indubitable absorption there of the appearances of sun-steeped atmosphere formed solidly his way of seeing things, his easy indolence and pliability. We may be fairly sure that for his first eighteen years, with his own ways of drawing and of painting, he filled in a free and casual existence. A commercial disaster brought this to an end and the family to Paris, where the

father found himself a job as shopman and his son the occupation of a notary's office-stool. From this last, on which too indolently he sat, the young man was removed, on the recommendation of his employer, to the door of Boucher's studio. That busy and triumphant master-manufacturer, having no use or time for what he suspected was a raw provincial, sent him on to M. Chardin, his own antithesis. Chardin, it is said, put in his pupil's hands the *pinceau* sooner than the *crayon*—a not unlikely thing. That he could make little of young Fragonard is due, we think, to the fact that from that rather indolent young man he demanded a precise and accurate application to still life, or the copying of closely finished paintings. At any rate they quickly parted company, and Frago spent his leisure strolling the streets and making memory sketches of whatever pictures he could find. That at this time he was no sort of draughtsman is incredible, and Boucher's original rejection of him is rather due to non-investigation of his ability than to conviction of his uselessness; for in six months' time his proficiency excited Boucher's eagerness and entitled him to the post of that master's trusted assistant.

Thence for two years, at a singularly impres-

sionable age, Fragonard assimilated his teacher's taste and style, until on demand he could almost forge a Boucher. Under his ægis, dispensing with the usual study in the Academy schools, the young man in 1752 competed for and won the Prix de Rome. The peculiarly artificial nature of the Academy at that date is suggestively commented on by the fact that Gabriel Saint Aubin, a disappointed competitor for the Prix, threw up his aspirations in that quarter and took to painting pictures "*d'actualité*"; a lucky accident to which we owe a very pleasing art. It is curious to reflect that now as then academic *almæ matres* nourished their nurslings not on a universal comprehensive diet but on a sort of alternative preparation, or patent food of strictly one-sided constituents. From 1752 till 1756 Fragonard "put in," as we have heard it said, his time *chez* Boucher and the École des Elèves Protégés, preparing for his Roman study. In the latter year, keenly desirous of Raphael and the Caracci, he went South with the final word of Boucher in his head: "If you take Michelangelo and Raphael seriously you're lost."

The student of that time was lamentably placed, being encouraged by his masters to fall

down before the poorest decadents of Italian art —the Bolognese and Neapolitans. Behind him the taste of Boucher, in front that of Pietro da Cortona, Guido, Solimena, and Caravagio, Fragonard had no excellent prospect. With an incompetent adviser to direct his aim he seems to have been dismayed. Overwhelmed by Michelangelo, dissolved by the beauty of the Raphaels, at length he turned to mediocrity, because there he saw the possibility of effectual rivalry—a motive in this context reflecting vast discredit on his masters. His study, on his own initiative, of Tiepolo was the natural recognition of a genius closely akin to his own. For a view of the artistic character of "Sieur Frago" during this, his period of studentship, we may turn to the periodical reports of his progress—an investigation that discovers the qualities we would anticipate; an impatience of what bored him, and painstaking mastery of the problems that intrigued his interest. Nor may we overlook the influence on him of Hubert Robert, his fellow-student, attributing to that painter of remarkably individual landscape some of the gravity, the emphasis, and superb style that so distinguish the landscape of Fragonard. Among the annals of art students, those of our painter, Robert, and in the highest

sense that gifted amateur, the Abbé Saint Non, must on the score of ideal circumstances, companionship, and undisturbed devotion to one mistress, Art, rank very high.

Fresh from Rome, the student of the French Academy met his patent and expedient duty; *le rendre compte* of his past stewardship, and the need of capturing the votes of the Académie before the walls of the Salon might accommodate his work. The performance of these duties was best accomplished by *la grande peinture*, *la peinture historique*. So, dutifully, Fragonard returned in 1761 to Paris, set up his easel for his effort in the grand historic style. After three years' trials his "Callirhoé et Corésus" (from the poet Roy) was finished and approved. Its appearance in the Salon of 1765 not only made a popular success, but wrung from Messieurs Diderot and Grimm, those august, influential critics, the anticipation that its painter, justly displacing Carle van Loo, would regenerate the *grande peinture* of France. Their rosy views were somewhat paled by the Salon of 1767, to which M. Frago sent mere trifles, heads of old men, "Enfans en Ciel," and drawings. These, from the hope of French grand style, extorted from the pained critics rather nasty innuendoes. When in

1769 no picture represented him, innuendo blossomed vividly. "M. Fragonard diverted from true art by filthy lucre." "M. Fragonard content to sparkle in *les boudoirs et les garde robes*." De Portales, chuckling, adds, "'*Les garde robes*' est un peu vif." For us, however, the question is not in what particular apartment our painter chose to shine, but why he had deserted the grand academic style, in which his "Callirhoé et Corésus" had shown such promise. Its financial failure, of course, was one of the main roots of his defection. Acquired by the king always it seems to have been unpaid for, whereas a ready settling market opened for his other exhibits of that year. Of them one in especial, a sort of "When the cat's away" episode, in the amorous vein of the Boucher school, quite clearly shows that at that time Fragonard consciously had in his hand another card, drawn from the Boucher pack, to supplement *la grande peinture*. But apart from the mere financial aspect of this question, we must scrutinise Fragonard's character as at this time suggested; his easy nature and rather fugitive attention. Would the severe concentration demanded by the grand style have commended itself to him for long, even in well-paid circumstances? We suspect not, especially

recalling his early inoculation with *la peinture* of the Loves and Graces.

Burdened, then, by no exacting principles or high mission, too *fougueux*, as his biographers insist, to sit assiduously before solemn classic canvases, he turned to the genial occupations that were thrust upon him; obliging, brilliantly capable in technique and invention. But we must take into count, as already we have said, his exact relations with his patrons. With the ladies and gentlemen of the theatre soon after his "Callirhoé" production his relations seem fairly established by those portraits in the La Caze section of the Louvre, on one of which is written: "Done in one hour, by M. Fragonard, 1769." The especial brilliance of their mastery, recalling that of Hals, assures us that he was no tyro at the most taxing exercise of brushwork. We may picture him in the wings or green-rooms, taking his fugitive chances as to sittings, intent on swiftly painting-in a more or less decorative idea of this actor or that actress. The larger part of his output, however, must have been those cabinet pieces of sensual suggestion. One of the most notorious and charming, "Les Hasards heureux de l'Escarpolette," now in Hertford House, is interesting on many counts.

For one thing, it can approximately be dated, 1768, and then an anecdote attaches to it that turns a beam upon the influence, on the painter, of the patron. This comes from Doyen, a brother artist, and tells how the Baron de St Julienne, sending for Doyen, imparted to him a brilliant idea for a picture he had conceived ; the idea, in fact, we now can enjoy in Frago's canvas. With precise instructions, the Baron explained to Doyen the point of his precious conception, at the same time indicating the young lady who should figure in the swing. But Doyen, who clothed most likely a consciousness of incompetence in smugness, not taking to the job, handed it on to Fragonard. He, we must admit, while he refined the noble lord's original idea, did the thing as thoroughly and daintily as possible. In general, the class adorned by Fragonard's chief patrons was the wealthy banker, broker, and financier class. Of vast fortunes and the intellectual taste needed to think out such a situation as "Les Hasards heureux," their main business as art-collectors lay in having their notions put pictorially, and their rooms decorated, by the last *bon ton* in painters. Obliging, supple, master of his dainty craft, of a witty, *grivois* cast of mind, Fragonard conscientiously did his best to realise in the most

appealing form whatever crude idea was given to him; or if his patron's invention flagged, to fill adequately the blank. The well-known "Le Verrou" and the "Coucher des Ouvrières" both emanated, in the raw, from a banker or a marquis. The fame, in fact, of M. Fragonard established him as *le dernier cri* for the decoration of your place. It might be, in a La Guimard's case, for a setting to lascivious dances or modish suppers; or in that of a du Barry, as a fit environment for the royal visits, that his art was in request.

As a matter of fact, he did not complete the decoration either of the famous danseuse's Temple of Terpsichore, in the Chaussée d'Antin, or of the du Barry's Pavillon de Louveciennes. Of the former patroness his curiously finished portrait remains, and scattered panels from her Temple, which made at last, perhaps, the most sumptuous prize for which a lottery ever was arranged. As for the panels, intended in 1770 for the favourite's room, they now enrich America, and reveal to us the master's highest pitch. For his failure to complete La Guimard's walls, naturally the salacious have served up the stock explanation. The simpler story, on the other hand, is more reasonable. Irritated beyond endurance by

her frequent complaint of his slow progress, our painter simply threw up the commission. Grimm rounds off the tale, which seems to have tickled Paris vastly, with a dramatic reprisal on the artist's part. Picking the opportunity, he stole into the salon on which his successor to the job was engaged. Swiftly, with that gentleman's brushes, temporarily laid down, he transformed a smiling portrait of La Guimard, as Terpsichore, into a snarling fury. She, on his heels bringing her friends to inspect the new painter's promise, seems to have been so pained at this as curiously to resemble Fragonard's amendment.

Than all this gossip, however, the historical ending of the business is more pregnant; for Louis David, an obscure and rather smarting student at that time, was ultimately engaged to finish up the decorations. With proper etiquette, he called on the great and popular Fragonard to obtain his sanction. The genial kindliness with which the older met the younger man was unwittingly a good investment, that in twenty years paid a useful dividend. To explain why Frago's panels for the du Barry's Pavillon were not accepted, when, with inferior competitors, he submitted them, is less simple. To Vien, the neo-Classicist, the prize fell, and it is impossible

that in point of true decorative merit his canvases seemed finer. One point must not evade us, since it is our endeavour to attain some sort of fair view of our artist's calibre. Into what must have struck him as a singularly important commission, he, beyond doubt, put his best and most personal endeavour; in them we would expect to find his truest note. Luckily then they found no favour, and in 1794 by Fragonard were taken into the safe haven of obscurity, to Grasse, where, as all the world knows, in 1898 Mr Pierpont Morgan picked them up. That they might have been acquired by our National Gallery, as a gift, is a digression, from which we return to the point engaging us. Preserved thus in perfect condition, they reveal, as we suggest, their master's most personal and spontaneous mood, in which he seems worthy to stand with Watteau. Their beauty and fragrant refinement, it is very likely, condemned them in the eyes of the du Barry's advisers; such delicate purity of atmosphere would barely perform the special function demanded of the decorations of the Pavillon de Louveciennes.

In this period, the 1770's, which produced the most animal of his pictures and drawings, also were achieved those of exquisite grace and refine-

ment. As a well-known critic has pointed out in the case of Rubens' second wife, happy marriage profoundly reacts upon a painter's work. There can be no doubt that the happiness Fragonard found in his newly married life and the simple circumstances attending it are mainly responsible for the inspiration of his best. Marrying in 1769, he and his young wife (she eighteen to his thirty-seven), her younger sister and brother, going out of Paris settled in the country. From this date are his numberless drawings of country episodes and children, of animals and village life. In them we see that his perception, his inner sympathies and taste were of a rare refinement; capable of adequately expressing the unsentimental love of a mother for her babies, the unaffected grace of children, and, in particular, in the poise of a young girl's figure or the proud turn of her head an infinite reticence and purity. And it is at this point, standing a moment to regard him, that we can take in the peculiar complex fibre of the man. His ceaseless rapid occupation, impelled by the instinct to express himself in form; his easy lack of principle, which even technically reflects upon his work. Clearly we note what one might phrase his innocence of conscience, an impartiality that enables him with an apparent equal zest to throw

off with all his charming mastery of means something that by its thorough ingenuity and ripe experience would satisfy the most jaded roué, and another that through its revelation of an almost mystic sweetness might command, we feel, that gentleman's respect. And in his swiftest notes and in the landscapes an instinctive fastidiousness of style, an unerring sense of economical selection, seem to argue a severity of taste that the affectation, the sometime coarseness of form and slipshod curving lines, in other drawings, appear stoutly to deny. That, as the de Goncourts think, he was *un accoucheur de songes*, treating in a sort of symbolic spiritual way the lewd ideas his patrons commissioned, is hardly tenable: for such patronage, gifted with such humdrum earthy ideas, the frankly material must have been the thing. That Fragonard, as another of his critics thinks, had moments of remorse is as improbable. He seems to have been one capable of segregating his two artistic and moral sides in a rare degree, and with such success that a "La Gimblette," or "Les Amants heureux," or "Les Baigneuses" lacked no carnal verve, were diluted by no *pudeur;* while no grossness impinged upon the exquisite "Le Baiser," "L'Education de la Vierge," or "Jeune Fille debout."

*Fragonard* *Photo. Moreau*

LA LEÇON
(*Louvre*)

Contemporary, of course, with the country residence was his *logement* at the Louvre, a coveted distinction. Here he lived sumptuously, the centre of his clique, amid costly *objets d'art.* Among his lifelong friends were Hubert Robert and Saint Non, his Italian studentship's companions—the former as fellow student, the latter as something akin to *protecteur.* Dumont, the miniaturist to Marie Antoinette, notable for his attendance at the lonely funeral of Greuze; Hall, the brilliant master of fashionable miniatures; and Carle Vernet, the landscape painter and caricaturist. Making his 40,000 livres a year, M. Frago easily could compass luxury and those acts of generous help to young and struggling painters. In his studio following his art were his sister-in-law, Marguerite Gérard, her young brother, and Rosalie, the Fragonards' beloved daughter. Her early death, at eighteen years, came as the first vibration of the upheaval that overthrew our master. His life was broken pleasantly in 1773 by his journey in the suite of M. Bergeret to Rome, on which journey and at its destination he made a vast amount of sketches, concerning whose ownership he and his wealthy host fell out. To Fragonard M. Bergeret was somewhat as the Abbé Goguenot to Greuze, or

M. de Julienne to Watteau. The quarrel over these drawings eventually was healed, and we hear of Fragonard in later years spending his every evening at the Bergeret town house, and being escorted home because he disliked to walk the streets alone at night. His occupations were insistent. At some date he made a journey into Holland, making landscape studies and copies from the Dutch masters. From Rembrandt he found revelation in the problems of diffusion of light and tone, in which direction, indeed, his supremacy over his school is so conspicuous. In 1780 it seems proved that he was visiting his Provençal home, since in that year at Grasse his son Alexander was born.

Thus then in ideal circumstances the time passed; one by one the media of his art were mastered; his range over the varying branches, *panneaux decoratifs*, easel pictures, portraits, line drawings, drawings in wash and gouache, engraving, etching, miniatures and landscape, was wide. His wife and Mlle. Gérard in their smaller ways each achieved distinction. But the end came. About 1788 their daughter died; in 1789 the storm of Revolution had broken. Then one might have seen messieurs *les peintres pensionnaires du roi* uneasily performing at the

extempore altar of the National Assembly; trying to catch the proper posture as they sacrificed their jewellery and *tabatières*, "pour la patrie." It cannot have been a heartening business to help pull down the house upon one's head. With the funds alarmingly reduced (Fragonard's 18,000 livres invested in *les rentes* now stood at 6000) and with patronage extinct, ruin approached. In her face our artist snapped his fingers for a while, adapting himself as best he might to new conditions. In this case his easy suppleness was pitiably futile, showing no firm grasp of the situation. "*À la Patrie*" we see dedicated his newest boudoir pieces; to her who had no sort of use for such outworn relics of the Boucher school, now that M. Louis David was regenerating art. By David's generous influence, however, for a brief hour the tide that, ebbing, seemed likely to suck Fragonard out into deep waters was stayed; he was appointed President of the Conservatoire du Museum des Arts. On that foothold he had time to breathe, and to produce what he supposed might pass for the regenerated art. In those years came such things as these: "The Senate assembled to decide on Peace or War;" "The Closing of the Temple of Janus;" poor halting efforts to achieve the note of classicism and historic style. He was,

of course, as they would say, somewhat old to howl harmoniously with the wolves. Then, suspect for his old connection with the court, he was removed from office at the Museum, by luck only escaping imprisonment or the scaffold, on which Mme. Chalgrin, wife of the court architect, and the Director of the royal printing press, afforded examples of the danger of mere association. In 1794, seizing the offer of a friend at Grasse, he hurried South, to find obscurity. With him he took those four canvases which in 1770 had been intended for the du Barry's Salon, and working quietly added another to their number. Conscious of the suspect nature of this work he made amends by decorating his host's staircase with unimpeachable designs—Phrygian caps, hatchets, and masks of Robespierre.

Of this great artist the last phase was not unhappy. Returned at length to Paris, obscurely in the Louvre he passed away the time. A very little man, below five feet; remarkably alert, with observant, twinkling eyes, high forehead, "ordinary nose," and ruddy cheeks, marked by smallpox. Affectionately called *le petit papa Fragonard*, he made for his friends a cherished figure. Impelled still to produce, and yet pliably adaptive, he seems to have attempted to catch

the new popular style set by "Les Horaces"; indifferently, no doubt. In 1806, of cerebral congestion, he died.

His eminent distinction from his school, of which he is the last and second greatest master, lies in his pictorial qualities. With the exception of Watteau, none of the rest compared with him in pictorial achievement. Watteau, indeed, had not his compass of mastery, and beside him men like Baudouin and Lavreince were, as now we say, mere illustrators. To Fragonard thoughts came, whether of indecency or charming purity, in pictorial terms: as line, as colour, as atmosphere, or light and shade. However prominent the subject, yet it is expressed in beautiful pigment by one who was a painter, to whom immensely precious were the proper conditions of his art. The others had learnt a pretty trick of speech; Fragonard spoke his mother tongue.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## JOSEPH VERNET

### 1714-1789

LANDSCAPE painting in the French *dix-huitième* school generally may be classed as of the Claudian tradition, of the neo-classic, and of the scenic but far more personal expression of Watteau's rendering. It will be seen that it was thus two parts Italian to one part French. Of the Claudian or Roman school Joseph Vernet was the principal exponent, and in his wake were trailed a little swarm of imitators and frank forgers.

Conspicuous as leader of the neo-Classicists was Hubert Robert, whose influence, as we have said, must be reckoned with in our estimate of Fragonard's landscape. Behind Robert we see painters, such as Demachy, who, busying themselves with antiquity, overlook what our friends Hubert and Frago invariably expressed — the perpetual and universal spirit that inhabits architecture irrespective of particular dates.

Joseph Vernet was born at Avignon in the last year of Louis XIV's reign. He came second in a list of twenty-two, and paid in after life the penalty of being about the only member of this crowded family to achieve considerable prosperity. His enterprising father was a painter in a minor way, living by contributing panels of flowers and ornamental scrolls to carriages, chairs, and pier-glasses. Losing as little time as possible in turning to account his offspring, he made an assistant of Joseph with every possible despatch. The boy thus had the luck to handle naturally the tools of his future profession. Soon, however, he was recognised as worthy of a better chance, and so was sent to Aix to study properly *la grande peinture*. At Aix, by the time he was nineteen, he had established a connection with influential patrons, and supplied them with decorative pictures. For Madame la Marquise de Simiane, the granddaughter of Madame de Sevigny, he did a dozen *dessus de porte*. In 1734, when he was twenty, one of his patrons gave him the chance of Italy, whither he set out, purporting, of course, to become the usual historic painter. On the way, though, on the diligence as it reached the heights above Marseilles he suddenly received *en plein* the infinite beauty

of the sea; the Mediterranean laid out below him, wonderful in its depth and delicacy and far glimmering horizon. The sudden shock of it brought to birth his vocation as a seascape painter. Jumping from the coach, regardless of his fellow passengers, he set to work upon the scene. Late at night, grey with dust and wearied, but in the fine exultation of one who had seen a vision, he turned up at the inn. The voyage from Marseilles but heightened this exalted mood; for face to face with the unleashed fury of Nature, lashed in the rigging, he seemed to have been initiated with dread rites into some sort of communion with elemental might. We like to dwell a little on the young enthusiasm of Vernet, enjoying its contrast with his later sophistication.

Arrived in Rome, in accordance with his historical intentions, he first made copies from the proper masters in the galleries, from which exercise, no doubt, he acquired that happy knack of stringing together the little crowds of people with whom he colonised his shore scenes. From the old masters he turned to one Fergioni, a somewhat *passé* painter of marines, from whom at least he learnt the nauticalities of ships. To finish his education he went to the studio of Adrian Manglard, a younger and fashionable sea painter.

His period of apprenticeship cannot have been very long, nor need it have been, since our young man had taken to the brush, as one might say, as soon as he assumed the dignity of breeches. By 1735 he had begun to sell his work, as that extraordinary diary of his, the "Livres de Raison," which he kept methodically from that year till the year before his death, makes clear. In this first period of his, from 1735 to 1751, when he left Italy for Paris, his best work was done, a fact illustrating the rule that marks off the tradesman-painter from the artist. For whereas this latter does not attain his finest expression before his fifth or even sixth decade, the former reaches his almost immediately, and steadily descends from that early accomplished level. The reason is only in the next room. What of sincerity and young enthusiasm the manufacturer-painter has brought to his profession quickly becomes rubbed, and finally polished off, by a mechanical excessive output. The soil in which his early ability was sown soon is exhausted, for lack of due rotation and fertilising endeavours. Vernet is a capital example, capitally displayed in his work and in his diary. Starting out with an honest share of enthusiasm and inspiration, in 1735 and the ensuing few years he sold but little. The crescendo then was gradual

but sure; he became the regular emporium to which, with their miscellaneous orders, all the visitors to Rome flocked. In the three years ending with 1751 he booked orders for nearly 140 pictures great and small, some "du plus grand finy," some with less. Keeping his books with commercial care and detail he lets us see him, as it were, serving at a counter, supplying whatever stock properties his customers demanded. The favourite ingredients for his paintings were cascades and rocks, sunsets, misty effects, wrecks, storms with zigzag lightning, "superb edifices," and crowds of figures. Not having it in him to work only at the call of a genuine inspiration, quite easily he entered trade.

In 1746 he was *agréé* by the Académie in Paris, where at the Salons his mellow Claudian effects or his tempests and mists were vastly popular. To Paris he went in 1752, and his success in the next year's Salon was ridiculous. In prose and verse his super-excellence was celebrated. His days, however, as a considerable artist were practically past; days in which he had done so sincerely and so well as to be able to stretch out with his hands and make a worthy link between Claude and the Romantic School of Landscape of 1830: Corot found him, as represented by

his first period, worthy of copying. But from now he was embarked on Parisian popularity and an extensive commission that disgusted him. The king commanded from him twenty portraits of French harbours, to be executed in a fixed order, and to be treated from the standpoint of an ordnance surveyor. In 1763 when, after ten years' continuous toil, he had done but twelve, war breaking out luckily broke off his task. It is, *en passant*, rather curious that in ten years so facile an executant had only compassed a dozen pictures. Although pecuniarily a loss, this job gained him the privilege of a lodging in the Louvre, where in 1763 he settled, next-door neighbour to Chardin and Lépicié.

Here he entered on his last, which we may call the Paris period. From now until his death, in 1789, he produced with a disastrous facility, painting by heart his cascades, his stormy seas, and all the other well-known features. From a letter of this date we see that he was, apparently sincerely, under the impression that his work was filled with the fire of inspiration, and that his artistic organism was so sensitive that the smallest things threw him into a disorder. But he was, of course, relying for his inspiration on his own convention; drawing incessantly on that for scenes of

which the originals had been long dimmed and worn smooth in his recollection. An unimaginative man, peculiarly lovable and kind; ever considerate of others, and generous to a fault, he was highly respected and warmly liked. His life in Paris, though beset with a swarm of needy relatives, and darkened by the madness of his wife, about 1770, was prosperous and happy. Musical evenings were his great enjoyment. His diary bewrays a man of a remarkably practical plain mind; no detail was too humdrum or dull to escape him, but barely any contribution to our comprehension of his art ethics finds a place in it. From us his struggles with the names of his English patrons are sure to draw a laugh, though, as a fact, the French are singularly slow in making out our spelling: how often does one see in solemn journals such things as "'A View on Hampstead Head,' by J. Constable!" Among Vernet's patrons we read the Duke of Bridswater, Milord Temistocle, Milord Schelburn, Sir Feshes-ton Haugh, Mrs Shukborgh, &c.

He died in December 1789, having lived to see his grandson Horace, the painter of popular battle pieces, who, being born in June, always claimed to have known his celebrated ancestor. In 1789 Carle Vernet, the son of Joseph, then

aged thirty-one, was *agréé* by the Academy. Starting under his father, and then Lépicié, on the career of historic painting, under the Directoire he turned off to caricature. He was, his biographer says, "un *gentleman* dans toute la force du terme." Investigation reveals the essential qualities of this complete embodiment. He was to a remarkable degree a horsey man, riding "comme un jockey," and, in addition, a redoubtable pedestrian. In the Salon of 1808 his "The Morning of the Battle of Austerlitz" incited Napoleon to decorate him with the Legion of Honour. The Emperor, in performing the ceremony, further contributed to our awed respect for Carle. "You are here," he said, "like Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*. See, thus I reward merit." Almost eighty, in 1836 he concluded his successful and mediocre career.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## HUBERT ROBERT

1733–1808

"Demachy's ruins in feeling are quite modern; Hubert Robert's, seen across time-strewn débris, have the majesty of grandeur. In Demachy's one suspects the help of the ruler that Hubert has flung out of window." Thus Diderot sums up the distinction of our painter from the minor members of that "ruin-impassioned" school; a distinction that exists because Robert, in the company of men like Fragonard, G. St Aubin or Lépicié, was concerned with the intrinsic pictorial conditions rather than with those of alien interest. While Demachy in his line, and Louis David in his, painted things for the sake of their antique suggestions and archæologic curiosity, Hubert Robert painted archæologic ruins as an excuse, admirable, we must admit, for essential pictorial qualities; the mystery of light and shade, the beautiful possibilities of pigment, the oppositions and symphonies of colour, and pre-eminently the

emotion with which the austere silhouettes and the impassive bulk of fabrics that patiently had out-watched centuries of important little men, inspired him.

He was of the first painters in that neo-classic enthusiasm, resultant on the Herculaneum discoveries and Winckelmann's activity, who went in largely and exclusively for pictures of an architectural landscape *motif.* He grew up intended for the Church, of a prosperous *bourgeois* family. It was remembered, or at least discovered when his biographers got to work upon him, that as a boy he covered his copy-books with drawings. It is always interesting to note how these childish scribblings are only remembered in the cases of eventual successful painters. In spite of these portents, in 1750, aged seventeen, he was entered for holy orders, but by a sustained policy of opposition he managed to escape from the ecclesiastic college into Michel Ange Slodtz' studio. This sculptor, having just come back from his twelve years' sojourn in Rome, gave Robert the tip, as by some it is called, to go there, and an introduction to Panini when he should have arrived. So to the former and the latter, who then called the tune in matters relating to the painting of ancient monuments, in 1754 he went. With

remarkable application he studied for some five years, counselled by the architectural painter we have named, protected by de Choiseuil. So regularly and long he worked as to mine his health, which a few years later collapsed.

Such virtue, however, procured an extrinsic reward. His industry and promise were heard of at the Villa Medici, the French Academy's quarters, and thence at Paris. Into the one he was received as a *pensionnaire*, and from the other, from no less a magnate than de Marigny, the powerful brother of a more powerful sister, came the condescension of an order for a picture. In 1760 he accompanied that gifted amateur, the Abbé St Non, to Naples, the Mecca of these neo-classic days. Returning to Rome they picked up, as we have seen, Robert's fellow student Fragonard, and started on a tour. The drawings of the two painters, and such a painting as that masterly and beautiful "Gardens of a Roman Villa" by the latter in the Wallace Collection, and the etchings of the Abbé, have made celebrated the months they spent. The beauty and the science of this little landscape in Hertford House rank it very high in the *dix-huitiéme* school, with those masterpieces of dignity and decoration, the "Foire de St Cloud," the "Colin Maillard," and the

*Hubert Robert* *Photo. Moreau*

VIEW IN A PARK

*(Dutuit Collection, Paris)*

"Balancoire" of the same master's. The happy influence on him of Hubert Robert, in this respect, must neither be exaggerated or ignored.

From the breakdown of his health, due to overwork, the latter by now seems to have picked up. His energy and athletic prowess are well known. No dare-devil enterprise deterred him. On this tour with Fragonard, while yet they were in Rome, he is credibly reported to have scaled the very summit of the Coliseum, with no help from any rope or steps, just for some trivial wager; to have walked along the cornice of the dome of St Peter's, and to have been almost lost in the Catacombs.

In 1762, his time at the Academy completed, he accepted the hospitality of the Maltese Ambassador, le Bailly de Breteuil, with whom he was used to read Virgil, stopping with him in Florence for two years. Thence, *viâ* Rome, he returned in '65 to Paris, where, at the hands of the Academy, his reception was most flattering: an almost unprecedented thing, he was *agréé* and *reçu* simultaneously. Fragonard, that Academic disappointment, was never more than *agréé*, since he failed to submit his *morceau de reception*. Standing thus in the open way of prosperity our artist married in 1767 one Anne Gabrielle Soos,

the daughter of a surgeon-major and some dozen years his junior. To the settlements he brought 4000 livres, she 2000; in every way it was a profitable match. With a wife devoted to him, and himself a rarely selfless husband, no cloud until the Revolution overshadowed them; then, inevitable compensation, their four children perished. From his marriage onward his prosperity accumulated. The critics Bachaumont and Diderot agreed in endorsing his unusual merits, and patronage was hardly behind them. In later years Ingres for some reason qualified his praise of him by adding: "But he is only a decorator." Judged by our later standards, on the other hand, it seems that it was his smaller work, the easel pictures, that reached the higher pitch. Decorative by nature and at his best a colourist, in a pleasant, quiet key, in these easel pieces he achieved a finer use of pigment, with rich impasto and "fat" quality. But perhaps of all, it is in his wash drawings that we see the most Vitality and Infinity.

His success, however, as a decorator of salons was immense, and as is the danger of success he succumbed to the temptations of over-production. At the full tide of his fame he was appointed Dessinateur of the King's Gardens. He colla-

borated with Carmontel in laying out the Parc de Monceau, and designed the gardens of Madame Tante de France. But of all these operations the especial sum and top was the "Bains d'Appollon," with which he took the place of the old Marais that Mme. de Montespan had arranged; the ancient oak set about with swamps. Robert's confection was, of course, antique; an elaborate rock supporting the Temple of Thetis. At its conclusion in 1780 he was awarded *logement* in the Louvre. In 1784 he was elected Councillor of the Academy, the highest step accessible to a non-historic painter, and was made Keeper of the King's Collection.

All this, of course, in the lurid times of the Terror, was most unfortunate, and not the least unlucky his prominence in David's now habitual enemy the Académie. At this conspicuous patriot's disinterested instigation Hubert Robert with many others was cast into St Pelagie; on the charge no doubt of tepid patriotism. Later, in "Pluvoise," he was transferred to St Lazare, where very jovial and considerate of others he must have been an acquisition. Rising at six, we learn, he would paint till noon, then take exercise in the yard. On Robespierre's fall and David's eclipse Robert and the other artists, as many as had escaped the guillotine, came out. In 1794 we see

him one of the ten members of the Conservatoire de Museums des Arts. From then he declined from publicity. At some time, perhaps in 1802, he revisited Italy. In 1808, three years after Greuze, two after Fragonard, he died.

In personality he seems to have been remarkably pleasant; "even his wife," they say, sincerely mourned him thirteen years. Regarding Robert's work in relation to the French school of landscape it seems to us to have a position akin to that Girtin occupies in relation to modern British landscape. Though the temper of these two artists in general is different, yet at times they touch a point of contact. At this point they are seen to display a similar austerity of conception and a like dignity of selection and design. As precursors of the modern interest in atmospheric phenomena Robert and Fragonard come in a long list, whose head will be found, shall we say, in the fifteenth century. None the less their contribution is very personal and perfect. On Watteau they make the advance, or as some may legitimately hold, in this particular case, the retrogression, entailed in a nearer approach to a naturalistic rendering. On them, however, naturalism was powerless to fasten banefully; their talismanic sense for emphasis and decoration guarded them.

# CHAPTER XXV

## JEAN BAPTISTE GREUZE

1725–1805

Of all French painters none, we suppose, is so popular as Greuze. No photograph store but prominently exposes examples of his most loved work in dainty frames. Without a doubt his work most copiously figures on the ivorine plaques you see in Swiss *bijouteries*, or the articles that are intended to grace the dressing-table. At the same time he is of all his contemporaries the most effeminate, the least pictorial, and by far the most mischievous. His nearest relative was Boucher; their point of contact was their pre-occupation with non-pictorial ideas conceived in an anecdotic way. But whereas Boucher dissipated his efforts on amorous suggestiveness in at least a direct sort of way, Greuze wasted his on a mawkish comic opera morality, and on an ingeniously insidious suggestion of sensuality. To bring down his game, the great sentimental public and the fleshly-minded, he thus employed

a double barrel. Those whom the goody-goody anecdote missed were sure to be hit by the sly glimpses of diverting detail and sensuous allusiveness embedded in the setting of his moral, and by the *sous entendus* that disfigure most of his single figures. Were he less effeminate, and so capable of rendering an elemental passion, his offence were purged. As it is, by the unnatural hothouse odour of his art and the type and age of the figures he employed, he makes the most vicious of appeals. In short, he may be ranked with the women writers of feeble sexual novels. And on Art and the relation to Art of the public his effect has been incalculably mischievous. On three counts—first, as the apostle of sentimentality and anecdote in lieu of the particular business of a painter; secondly, as the high priest of the cult of soft, formless prettiness; and thirdly, by reason of the position he occupies as an honoured Old Master, prominently advertising, with this sanctification to commend him, his slipshod craftsmanship, his polished and his sentimental prettiness, wherewith to corrupt the credulous.

Yet as a man he had estimable points; he was honourable in conduct, and in taste fastidious. Though not, as we should say, a man's man,

*Greuze* *Photo. Morcau*

L'ACCORDÉE DE VILLAGE

*(Louvre)*

being far more at his polished ease in the society of cultured women, yet he did not hesitate in his Royalist fervour to swagger down the street wearing his sword at a time when it was frank defiance of the Revolutionism in power. Then again we should remember that as a painter he had, in his earliest environment, a vicious atmosphere of insincerity all round him. For his father, a thatcher of Tournons, though no doubt delighted at his son's advent in 1725, found this original feeling modified by that person's growing fondness for Art; a vagabond's job, no question of it, in a normal father's eyes. So when in 1738 a sort of picture-pedlar, Grondon by name, of Lyons, came hawking his wares at Tournons, Greuze *père* made him a generous offer. "Do I want a picture?" he replied. "D'you want a painter, for I can let you have one for nothing?" Grondon stepped in to see what sort of painter, and when, after their supper, young Jean Baptiste threw off a sketch of the two men a trifle drunk the deal was settled. The father seems to have been pained, the painter-hawker satisfied. To Lyons then into the factory of this Grondon young Greuze went, and was put to the sort of work Watteau had had to do; the mechanical reiteration of certain popular subjects, and the

reproduction, as swift as possible, of old master paintings and engravings that would sell. At this, of course, he acquired a facile unconscientious execution and a vitiated palate which no innate or acquired taste in later years remedied. Besides picking up in Grondon's studio the germ of his future disease there too he found, as he said, the revelation of womanly grace and beauty. Mme. Grondon, seemingly a very charming woman, unconsciously inspired the handsome and impressionable youth with the overmastering obsession of a first passion. In time naturally to her, whose husband seems to have been a coarse, unsympathetic person, frequently away, the fire spread. How far in their helpless hands the matter would have gone need not concern us. Her consciousness of the debt she owed her children and Greuze's sense of honour cleared the air; he packed up his box and went to Paris.

In this box he took his only original work—a homely, sentimental thing, which heralded his future vogue, entitled "Le Père Expliquant le Bible." Immediately, however, he did not with it set the Seine alight. Reaching Paris in 1746, it was nearly ten years before he was discovered. The interval he passed in living as he could by portraiture, and studying when he might at the

Académie under Natoire. From that eminent mediocrity he parted in one of those bursts of foolish vanity that characterise him. To some criticism of his work he snapped out, "You'd be lucky if you could do as well," and leaving the Académie knocked at Pigalle's door, bringing as recommendation his studies and the "Father and Bible" picture. Pigalle gave him the encouragement and patronage he sought; under his wing, with a portrait of him, and a new sentimental-morality piece — "L'Aveugle trempé" — an adaptation of the countryman and adder fable, he became in 1755 *agréé* by the Académie. That year's Salon saw him popular. This kind of comic opera peasant picture was a revelation; what Watteau had done for the *beau monde* of the Tuileries and Versailles, Greuze was supposed to be doing for the honest, humble villagers; erroneously, of course, for his presentment of peasants was purely stagey. But the fashionable world could hardly have been expected to feel the absence of truth or to care about it; a Millet had been as unpopular with them in 1755 as he was a century later.

Next year the Abbé Gougenot took Greuze to Rome, an expedition that gives us little but another story on the lines followed by Mme.

Grondon's. In this case, however, it was filial in place of maternal affection that saved the situation. Engaged by the Duc d'Orr to teach Laetitia, his daughter, drawing, Greuze, with his particular charm and gallant bearing, made as deep an imprint on the young princess as did her loveliness on him. Her awakening idea of the sort of shock such an alliance would cause her princely father, and our painter's honourable scruples on the point, prevented the affair exceeding elaborate preparations for elopement. Back in Paris in 1757, he showed in the Salon the first of his famous series of young girls' heads, few of which escape the disfigurement of languorous suggestion that, in view of their youth, strikes us as the more unwholesome. Of Greuze's artistic career, perhaps the most unlucky accident was his happening to chime with Diderot's misconceived ideal: the union in one of the wholly alien arts of moral homily and pictorial expression. The fulsome encouragement of Diderot and the fond joy of the public over his sentimentalities destroyed him when added to the simpering weakness of his innate taste.

The first thing this taste led him up to was, as we know, the meretricious allurement of ovals and soft contours; and the fact of his often

THE MILKMAID
*(By Greuze. The Louvre)*

speedy dissatisfaction with the models he had on impulse chosen seems to us of more than usual interest; for it reveals, as it might be, a subconscious taste in him revolted by the nauseous stuff it had to swallow down, yet impotent to reject it since Greuze probably was unable to diagnose the cause of his uneasiness. However this may be, it is beyond doubt to his lack of knowledge of form and his consequent invariable selection of prettiness (which is "beauty skimmed of form") that his great popularity is due. Having found this key on the bunch, it becomes a mere matter of arithmetic. That which answers to the most prevalent ideal is naturally the most popular; and whereas, generally speaking, perhaps one person in ten is naturally able to see form, it is readily grasped that prettiness is ten times more than beauty in demand. Nor would one expect that the uncultured and the so-called cultured, who consider "sweet" the heads on bonbon boxes, bonus pictures, and soap posters, should think a Mantegna or "The Duchess of Milan" anything but ugly. Then, in addition, as we have pointed out, Greuze could capture other votes by the insidious appeal he almost always made to fleshly sentiments, and by the Sandford and Merton morality he preached. Round his pictures, as

one of his biographers nicely has put it, raged an epidemic of *sensibilité*. The fashionable world gazed at his "Paralytic Father Succoured by his Children," his "Prodigal Punished," and the like, with glistening eyes, giving little cries of tender delight; each day discovering how beautiful were the virtues, how charming it was that paralytic parents actually were rescued from imminent peril by dutiful children.

Greuze, in 1761, in marrying Mlle. Babuty, the bookseller's daughter, embarked upon the tragedy of his life. He seems to have been less well advised, or more reckless, in undertaking this affair than certain of the lookers-on. When, in 1761, he sent to the Salon a portrait of his wife, "En Vestale," Diderot's comment sounds ominous. At any rate, in no long while his domestic happiness and peace had gone to bits; his large income could barely grapple with the extravagant dishonesty of his wife. And with all those his honour was scandalously involved. But yet, we understand, with a mixture of chivalry and infatuation, he bore it for more than twenty years. By then he was fast nearing the ruin and oblivion in which he died. At the Revolution, with all his fellows, he dropped into the fatal chasm of the *démodé*. To the fact

that his relations with the Académie for years had been notoriously tense he probably owes his immunity from tangible persecution. There can be little doubt that had David wished it his close association with the royal family had given abundant pretext for his arrest. But he was at loggerheads with the Académie, which, after having waited some fourteen years for his *morceau de rêception*, had ventured sternly to condemn the absurd effort at the Grand Style he at last submitted. The last years of his decadence he spent pluckily seeking orders to avert starvation. Fastidious, and by instinct of the *beau monde*, the whole business and heroics of the Revolution disgusted and amused him. "Le citoyen Homer et le citoyen Raphael," he remarked, "will last quite as long as these celebrated citizens whose names I don't know." By a recent writer it has been credibly opined that he consoled himself, and, as it were, paid tribute to his past association with the Royal house, by painting the portraits of the little dauphin and little Mme. Royale. The one, it is suggested, he would have done from such observations as he might have made of the little boy when, with the king and queen, after the abortive flight in 1791, he was imprisoned at the Tuileries; the other when,

in 1793, the remnant of the family was at the Temple. In 1792 we know the king granted the broken Greuze a pension, of which, of course, he realised but little. He dragged out in want and obscurity the next thirteen years, dying in the Louvre in March 1805. When news of his death got about people were surprised. "You don't mean to say that Greuze was still alive?" He exhibited as late as the Salon of 1804.

While his vogue with the general is likely for some time to last, it seems improbable that even the poor shreds of reputation he now has with those whose judgment is more exacting will long cover him; for of the qualities in art that can buy permanence he has none. His pet maxim, "Soyez piquant si vous ne pouvez pas être vrai," in itself constitutes the measure of his value. Of all things, artifice for its own sake is most surely perishable. David's motto, "Let us be true before we are beautiful," in intention sounds the note that rings in all permanence. For the especial themes affected by Greuze, morality and sex, the only qualities that will save the one from mawkishness and the other from indecency are honesty and unequivocal primary candour.

# CHAPTER XXVI

## PIERRE PRUD'HON

### 1758–1823

WHOLLY preoccupied by his own affairs Prud'hon's position in relation to the general stream of French art in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries was, as one might say, upon the bank. Floating on the current of continuity Géricault and Delacroix and Millet may have thrown a glance, admiringly, at him. But he cannot be said to have affected their course. Seated there he could look up the stream to Watteau and down to Delacroix without seeing anything that had influenced him or he had set in motion. In the same way of his relation to his age we may remark its irrelevance and detachment. In him no new conception of the aspect of Nature appears, no contribution to a solution of the innumerable problems of phenomena and technique that stand arrayed against the painter. But though the sudden disappearance of all his work known to us would leave us puzzled by no

hiatus in the direct line of French art, yet it would rob us of a great and tender charm; though he stood quite clear of the current, we cannot but feel sure that the reflection he made in it was appreciably beautiful. And though, as really is usually the case, much of the contemporary criticism of his particular smiling type was justified, still in this type, and in his more austere, he invented a lovely and a gracious thing.

The reason of his especial isolation is firmly wound up with his character, which very patently was the inevitable outcome of environment; for he was born the tenth and last child of peasant parents, into the grey unhappiness of the French *canaille*, in Louis XV's day. His earliest impressions must have been of harassment and want —want bodily and spiritual. His father, a stonemason's labourer of Cluny, struggling to keep alive his disproportionate family, cannot have regarded him with much enthusiasm; his brothers and sisters, resenting their mother's partiality for her youngest born, ignored when they did not bully him. Indeed, amid the monochrome discomfort of that existence his mother's tenderness alone told as colour, flushing his unhappiness and creating or at least cherishing in him that intense need of and responsiveness to womanly

sympathy which so characterised his nature. Soon, in one year, he lost father and mother, a loss that had been perhaps irreparable. By his environment thus crushed in upon himself he grew up shyly shrinking from any contact, lest it should entail rebuff. Told off to forage for firewood in the forest that menaced gloomily the village, no doubt from this environment too his character and sensitiveness took reflections—of loneliness and shadows. The keen susceptibility to beauty, however, that had been born in him was, of course, fostered by the melancholy wonder of the forest—its mysterious recesses and gleams of remote light, and would be heightened by his coming association with the rich fane of the Benedictines.

For another influence of tender sympathy came to supplement his mother's, from the Curé Besson, of Saint Marcel, the parish church of Cluny. This estimable man adopted him as acolyte and pupil, and seeing in him unusual qualities finally sent him to the monastery of the Benedictines. There in the famous abbey, richly encrusted with carvings, sculpture, paintings, tapestries, and the marvellous colours of the windows, young Prud'hon's zeal for beauty sprang into conscious activity; we can see how imme-

diate and overwhelming would be the appeal of all this sumptuously beautiful environment to a sensitive, self-centred, and melancholy boy. At once the impulse to reproduce tingled in him, and in a typical way he set about compassing his desire. Secretly hiding his ambition from the brethren, he collected horse-hair from the harness in the monastic stables, and crushed from flowers the juices, to make him brushes and pigment. So, too, from bits of wood and soap he whittled and modelled his rude conceptions. His efforts, however, were remarked and brought to the notice of the bishop of Mâcon, who, interested, had him sent to the Dijon School of Art, at the expense of the province Mâconnais. Devosges was his master at Dijon, a man of exceeding kindness and zeal, who in after years could count as the feathers in his cap Rude and Prud'hon, the glories of his school. This Devosges in matters human more even than artistic, for years supported Prud'hon in his trials, and, it is interesting to note, from his master in time became his disciple.

For four years our young artist worked at Dijon, subject always to his nervous temperament and somewhat weak and hesitant character. Of a very different build from the Davids, the

Bouchers, the Ingres or Fragonards, who in their robust self-confidence never faltered in production, Prud'hon was prone to attacks of distrust and dissatisfaction, under which he worked but fitfully. His progress, however, was conspicuous and attracted to him the encouragement and aid of what we might term the Mâconnais County Council. In those days the municipal authorities of every province seem to have made it a personal matter to foster artistic talent. But in 1778 his fair promise was clouded over. Here he gently let himself down into the morass from which all his life he never cleared his feet. Revisiting, in the spring of 1777, his native Cluny he had become entangled with and wronged one Jeanne Perret, the daughter of the local notary. She being near her time in February 1778, demanded that he should marry her, which, with a ready sense of honourable obligation, at once he did. From what we know of her, even admitting that, like Dürer's wife, she may have come in for an exaggerated and embroidered charge, it seems more likely that the wrong originally done was evenly shared. It is more in the picture that she, an hysterical and vain person, led the gentle diffident youth than that he played Don Juan. However, there they were, at the altar in 1778,

and no honourable reparation of a wrong can have been much more expensive. Eleven days after the ceremony their first son was born, and the business of pot-boiling had come to our young painter, who in his twentieth year had not yet completed his academic course of study. To round off his position nicely his father-in-law disowned the bride, which, with her superior social status, we may be sure provided that bitter-tempered person with perpetual missiles of attack.

Luckily, however, a patron was at hand, the Baron de Joursaunvault, whose hobby it was to encourage obscure talent. From Prud'hon (who had inserted, on his marriage, the letter "h" in his name) he commissioned paintings, drawings, and engravings. A small portrait of the Baron at this date, in an allegorical situation, has survived, and letters from the painter to his patron, dated '79 and '80, have come down to us, enlightening us as to his method of study, and revealing in him a clear-sighted criticism, a pleasant modesty, and a lack of reticence as to his discontent, such as seems natural in one of his easily affected temperament. His study was of the antique to absorb an ideal form, and of anatomy from the life to acquire a corrective truth; of Raphael, Titian, and Rubens to

*Moreau*

*Photo. Moreau*

LANDSCAPE

*(Louvre)*

assimilate elegance of composition, an unforced expression of sublimity, the glow of colour and arrangement of light and shade. Above all his letters cry for an escape from Cluny, where a parochial narrowness oppressed him, and no doubt the harassment of disturbances and mocking taunts at home crippled his sensitive inspiration. An instance is given us from this date of his foolish vacillation and kind-heartedness. Having laboriously scraped up the pence that should buy him a winter's stay in the atmosphere of art at Dijon, he could not resist lending it at the last moment to a needy friend.

In 1780 his patron sent him up to Paris with an introduction to the engraver Wille, on whose "Memoirs" one so relies for the art news of those times. This letter lays stress upon the weakness and childlike malleability of the young provincial; his natural gentleness and virtue, and his susceptibility to evil influence; his great need of sympathy and constant encouragement. For three years he stayed in town, where he did not actually do much work, or make much call upon Wille's notice, probably on account of his marked distaste of any sort of supervision. But he made friends, notably of the Fauconnier family —Madame, *dentellière* to the court; Monsieur

somewhat of a philosopher sociologist, bitten with Rousseau; and Mademoiselle his sister, a wholly charming girl, with whom in the three years Prud'hon made a great impression. From these good people for some reason, shyness and humiliation probably, he kept the fact of his marriage, thus unintentionally affording Mademoiselle a space for building on. In 1783 abruptly he left Paris, having, it is surmised, seen her erection and the need for razing it.

He returned to Dijon, there to enter for the Etats de Bourgogne Prix de Rome, which he gained next year. A popular story of this episode is that while working in his cubicle he heard from the next some one sobbing. Climbing over he found a fellow competitor, possibly his friend Naigeon, with whom he had gone to Paris, in tears of desperation. With customary foolish generosity he "knocked off" for the weeping one his seemingly hopeless beginning, thereby winning him the prize. The possible Naigeon, the story concludes, confessed to his limited share in the achievement, and Prud'hon was hailed victor. If we like on the score of improbability to reject the tale, objecting that if Prud'hon could gain the prize by patching up another's failure surely his own effort would have been patently more

successful—well, we may. To Rome, at any rate, he went in 1784, crossing, as he entered, David returning to Paris laden with his celebrated "Horaces." Rome made a deep impression on him; he thrilled at the touch of every beauty, which doubtless wore a glamour for him. As we would expect, he found the flippant, wordy pretensions of his compatriot students, who passed the time disputing on the merits of the antique and the demerits of Raphael in the cafés rather than their studios, quite intolerable. Shrinking from them, intensely concerned lest any, even his State-appointed officers, should see his work in an incompleted stage, he pursued his solitary, reclusive way. Raphael was first his god, to yield to Leonardo, and afterwards Correggio. Both Raphael and Leonardo he learnt primarily from tapestries; in the latter's case of his "Last Supper." Thus we see Prud'hon untainted by the prevalent taste, uncontrolled by a Natoire, who should lead him up to Bolognese or Neapolitan show pieces. True, he was required by his Burgundian States to copy Guido's ceiling at the Rospigliosi Palace, from which he was prevented through the misconduct of another copyist, who enraged the princely owner by breaking alabaster vases and snoring in his

gallery. Prud'hon, of course, wished to work on a Raphael or a Leonardo, but could gain no sanction for his views. Ultimately it was a ceiling by Piero da Cortona that he had to do, and which in '87 he completed. The three years he passed in Rome saw him now hopefully at work, now despondently inert. Rebuffing supervision from the Académie for a rather trivial worldly reason; "an artist," he wrote, "whose progress has been watched makes hardly any sensation when at length he comes out;" he quotes Leonardo to support his view that solitude is essential. In another letter we read his advice to his little son, who is competing for some prize: "Leave to those who cannot express emotion and stir our hearts the trivial advantage of tickling the eye. Let them indulge in tinsel and glitter, but do you seek strength of expression, decided form, largely felt, draperies with simple, severe folds, and reposeful masses."

His copy finished he travelled north towards Paris leisurely; stopping with his wife and boy, painting his old friend the Curé Besson. Halting at Beaune, where he modelled the bust of Madame de Joursanvault, and at Dijon to paint his friend and former *maître*, Devosges. Paris he reached in that momentous 1789, so fatal to the older school

of painters. His wife, with whom he had scarcely lived these ten years, came up to rejoin him. In 1791 and '93 she bore him two more sons, whom no doubt, in his straitened circumstances, he found superfluous. We hear of him left with the children in his painting room while Mme. Prud'hon went about to see the sights, the executions, and the pageants; we learn that he had no stockings to wear, that he would implore his friends to take his wife out and keep her there as long as possible. Delacroix attributes to Mme. Prud'hon's neglect of her children, her extravagances and incessant "scenes," the long poverty and obscurity of the master. We cannot doubt that he was more than ordinarily vulnerable by the distractions of unhappy children screaming in his studio and scrambling on his easel, and by the nervous jangling inevitably set going by bickerings and hysterics. His first patron in these pinched days was le Comte d'Harlai, who had of him three drawings of subjects after our master's gentle allegoric heart, "L'Amour reduit à la raison," "Heartless Love," and the like; from the engravings of them we can make out something of their charm and much of their weaknesses of affectation. Vastly heartened by this symptom of what might turn out really to be the dawn of prosperity, all through

the first period of the Terror Prud'hon assiduously produced, projecting schemes of Republican decoration, making drawings of allegorical yet topical subjects. What is more he provided a confectioner with a "Venus and Cupid" and a "Leda," for his bonbon boxes, and shop signs for various trades-people. With the fall of Robespierre, much admired by him, the tightening hand of want and the culminating famine of '94, it struck all who might as high time to seek the country. As Fragonard sought Grasse so Prud'hon fled to Gray, a village on the Saône, where perhaps the good Devosges may have been of service once again. His wife he placed quite near at Rigny, to be confined with yet another child. It is not without significance that we hear nothing to suggest that landscape ever attracted our painter, though it seems unlikely that he should have passed so much of his life in the heart of it and not have been susceptible to it. From this period, 1794 to '96, we hear but of portraits, one of which, the "Mme. Anthony and her Children," at Lyons, embodies his charming qualities, and that strainedness that conveys an uneasy affectation.

When in the fall of '96 they came back to Paris, just in time for the birth of the last child,

Emilie, Prud'hon at last had reached the straight, as one might say, that took him to the tape, Success. David, as we have seen, was arbiter of taste, and as we might suppose not enthusiastic over this provincial who humbly called on him. The *démodé* Greuze, for whom as a man one must have a respect, was for his part quite encouraging. "This man will go further than have I; he'll bestride these two centuries in seven league boots." In the face of David's solemn patronising scorn, Prud'hon soon won his way into the first line. His "Wisdom and Truth descending on to Earth," which he submitted in the form of a drawing in black and white chalk as a design for a ceiling, gained him prominence and a *logement* at the Louvre, in the company of *le petit papa* Fragonard, Greuze, and Hubert Robert. We hear that "while Madame Fragonard talks, Mme. Prud'hon cries." This drawing shows us Prud'hon at his best; having well assimilated somewhat of the sternness of Leonardo with the soft Correggian charm. When finished his ceiling was too big to pass out of his Louvre studio, and a passage had to be opened up. It figured in the 1799 Salon, and seemed the more wonderful in virtue of the proximity of Davidian historics and dismal relics of the Greuze school

of sentimentality. From this date our master's popularity was assured though not unassailed; to him the David clique applied the title "the Boucher of to-day." His success was consummated by the patronage of David's great protector, Napoleon, whose wives in due order he came to paint, and his heart's desire by the frequent commissions for large decorations that were given him. In 1801 Napoleon had almost all the artists turned out of the Louvre, lest they might set the place on fire—a wise decision. So Prud'hon took up his quarters at the Sorbonne. Here the distressing conduct of his wife attained an intolerable pitch. Two years later they separated, though even thus she constantly returned to treat whom ever she found in to a violent scene. At last, hysterically involving the Empress Josephine in one of her displays, she was sent to an asylum. To fill the place in his life by her never filled now came Mlle. Mayer, ex-pupil of Greuze. Sympathetic, devoted to his art and well-being, from a pupil she became inseparable from him: caring for his house and children, loving and loved, respected by his friends. And yet we cannot feel that this, his second experiment of womanly companionship, was favourable: we hear again of jealousies and

irritations breaking in upon his work, preluding no doubt the final tragedy.

After the Salon of 1808 the Emperor in person gave him the Legion of Honour, on the strength of his grandly impressive "Justice and Divine Vengeance pursuing Crime"; the gracefully Correggian "Psyche carried off by Zephyrs," and a portrait. In these our painter, now in his fiftieth year, may be said to have touched his zenith; another case of this particular period of life synchronising with the ripest expressions. From Psyche and Divine Vengeance he turned in 1810 to the Blessed Virgin, to whom again he turned, in an Assumption, nearly ten years later. But sweet though his conception be, his feeling seems to have been too impersonal to succeed with so difficult a theme. In the Assumption the Virgin gladly and girlishly is wafted upwards, with that particular motion he so admirably managed, to her crowning glory. But she is not more than devoutly sweet. His last period contains his finest output: his "Venus and Adonis," at Hertford House; his Psyches; his Young Zephyrs, of which in the same gallery we have so delightful examples, and his "Minerva upraising Genius." The horrible tragedy of 1821, from whose shock his sensitive organisation could

not be expected to recover, practically closed his labours. Depressed, they say, and dreading an enforced separation from the master, Mlle. Mayer came into his studio one day, Saturday May 26, to be precise, and asked him would he marry her if he became a widower? Probably vexed at the sudden interruption and with the readiness to refuse anything at the first, which is so marked in shyly nervous people, he gruffly said, "Not I." The unhappy woman left the room and hurried to his bedroom, where on his shaving-glass she found his razors. Prud'hon meanwhile, immersed in work, thought no more of the business. A little later, leaving the studio for a stroll, he noticed a knot of people seriously agitated, who shrank back, avoiding him. He went up to his bedroom suspecting something strange but unprepared for the horror of the spectacle he saw.

Broken by this he was taken in by a good friend, in whose house he made it a piety to finish a picture of his pupil's. Thence he removed to Cluny, and sketched in "The Soul quitting the Earth," his last work. He died in February 1823.

As M. Bricon, in his book on the master, very justly says, Prud'hon pre-eminently was French. To him a decorative expression was practically

instinctive; his greatest technical asset is the firm and often beautiful arrangement of spaces and silhouettes in which he delights. And in his conception of woman is his nationally typical perception of sensuous grace and charm; subtleties of pose and poise and femininity. Likewise there is, typically, in him the proneness to an excessive subjectivity which leads him often to suggest an affectation and a faintly artificial odour. Very rarely in his school have women that unconscious candour, that simple unconcern with sex that distinguishes them in Dutch and English Art of the best periods. Yet, on the other hand, his art was single-minded; he had no extraneous motives to dissipate his forces, as had Boucher and his following or David and his. Whereas Boucher, and Fragonard too as far as that goes, had to divide his attention in order to illustrate adequately appetising subject matter, and David had to keep his eye on Rome or Greece, Prud'hon was only busy with an appeal to the heart through the eyes. Against him the main charge is a too frequent lack of the condition of Vitality, due to his referring to his own ideal for inspiration rather than recurrently to Nature. The artist who can do this with impunity must in himself and his ideal be made of sterner stuff and must

have within him a deeper accumulated knowledge of Nature and an inexhaustible invention. We should remember, moreover, that those whose final expression might seem to suggest no reference to Nature have all the same, in every probability, referred to her with a transformed vision, to us incomprehensible. The great service to French Art that Prud'hon did was to keep burning, in an era of chill repellent formalism and falsehood, the lamp of beauty, whose oil was Truth; morally of sentiment, externally of atmosphere. Although on a lower step yet he stands with those who, like Fouquet, Gian Bellini, Giorgione, van Eyck, Rembrandt, and Watteau, have proved the inseparability of atmosphere and inner content.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### PORTRAIT PAINTERS OF LOUIS XV AND XVI

FROM Mignard, Rigaud, and Largillière the branch of portraiture had considerably to droop before Nattier could reach it. Its downward course, no doubt, was arrested by painters like Joseph Duplessis, who, in beautiful quality of pigment and wit, is the worthy successor of Perronneau and Latour; Lépicié, who came nearest to the mark Chardin had made, and Louis Tocqué. These, in virtue of the sincerity of their work, and their abstention from the prevalent vice of pandering flattery, achieved fine portraiture. Lower than Mme. Vigée Lebrun bore it, that art, in Louis XVI's reign or the Empire, hardly could expect to go. Boucher as a portraitist was no especiality, though in certain of his Madame Pompadours he indisputably touched a gracious charm. Fragonard as a portrait painter conspicuously was superficial and inadequate. Carle van Loo, for his part, strikes us as entirely tedious in this rôle, though not uncon-

scientious. To Greuze, on the other hand, the credit lies of having attained in his portraits a fuller measure of interest, that at times rises almost to Vitality.

Of all these painters Nattier was perhaps the least ambitious. Born in 1685, early he entered the Académie, and there won much praise and incidentally the appreciation of Louis XIV. At the death of the King he was tempted to go join, in Amsterdam, the court of Peter the Great, and to paint a number of their portraits. Thence wafted by a solid reputation, he went to the Hague and painted the Czarina, whose satisfaction sent him warmly to the Czar, in Paris. Allowed to paint the Emperor, with him too he gave almost excessive satisfaction. For Peter, in his high way, commanded him to follow to St Petersburg and settle there. The perils of the journey, however, and the penalties of such an exile by no means made Nattier enthusiastic. When finally he refused the offer, the monarch felt so thwarted as to carry off all the portraits of himself and the Czarina, unpaid for. At the age of thirty-three, Nattier was received into the Académie, and simultaneously entangled in the curious system of the Scotch banker, Laws. Almost ruined by his speculations, he was barely

*Vestier* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF THE PAINTER'S WIFE
(*Louvre*)

heartened when his wife's anticipated *dot* similarly was engulfed.

Popularity at length came, led gladly in by the painter's happy knack of establishing, if not as actually Olympian, then as respectably mythologic, whoever sat to him. For thirty years perseveringly he served up as goddesses, or nymphs, or heroes, all the courtier world. Mesdames France, the Queen, her future successor, La Chateauroux, Madame l'Enfante de Parme, one and all as Dawn or Silence, Hebe or Flora, were inanimately and suavely painted. In all this royal ointment the inevitable fly was lack of remuneration; the King in this respect scandalously treated his honoured painters. Falling ill in 1762, prevented from pursuing his trade, Nattier made shipwreck. Four years' grievous suffering were closed by death in 1766.

His last days were only alleviated by the devoted attention of his daughters. His young son, a lad of promise, was drowned at Rome. One of these daughters had married Louis Tocqué, also a portraitist, who, born in 1696, had studied first with the stagey mediocre Bertin. Resolutely keeping clear of *la grande peinture*, he had been able to cultivate his distinct gift. In no long time, in the face of what was recognised as frank-

ness, his books were full of sittings. From 1737 for twenty-two years he regularly exhibited in the Salons. In 1739 his portrait of the little Dauphin (a dull enough performance) started him on his career as court painter. The success, in 1740, of the portrait of Marie Leczinska, Louis' unfortunate wife, confirmed his course. Mesdames Adelaide and Henriette; the Prince of Wales; de Marigny, his masterpiece; and, in a foolish heroic moment, the singer Jelyotte as Apollo; the Duc de Chartres—in short, all the world, sat to him. With women and exalted personages he was far less successful than with comparatively plain, blunt men, like financiers. In 1757 he went to Russia to paint the Empress Elizabeth and the court. The next year to Denmark, and dealt with the King, Frederic V, his Queen, and family. In '59, loaded with honours and more tangible recognitions, he returned to find a warm welcome from the Académie. Yet another visit to Denmark, and the honoured *logement* in the Louvre, saw his work completed. Retiring from active appearance he died in 1772.

Informed by a simplicity and candour of vision, his portraits, the best of them, will survive when much else of his day is forgotten. In the same

*Tocqué* *Photo. Moreau*

MADAME DANGER
*(Louvre)*

way, if not indeed a fuller, will persist the art of Nicolas Bernard Lépicié (1735–1784). As a genre painter of Greuze subjects almost in Chardin's manner and as a portraitist he occupies a notable place in the later eighteenth-century school. Very sincerely above painting for the sake of attractive subject, he dealt with the homely themes of Greuze or Fragonard or Chardin in a wholly individual manner. That his *métier* was genre his endeavours in historic painting openly exposed. It is in the rich atmospheric qualities of such pictures as the self portrait at Abbeville, that of a lady in the collection of Baron Henri de Rothschild; the little "Man Reading" at Havre, which seems to herald the Hague school, and the "Lever de Fanchon" in the Collection Chaix d'Est-Ange, and in their prime pictorial incentive that Lépicié is revealed.

François Hubert Drouais (1727–1775), for his part, is shown us at his best in such a delightful portrait as the little Marie Antoinette in the Jones Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which doubtless was the original from which the portrait we reproduce was done; in "The Princesse de Condé" at Welbeck, and in the "Madame le Marquise de Pompadour" at Orleans. In these the presence of sincerity and

some aspiration are gladly felt. On the other aspect of his art, where a Nattier-like desire of insipid flattery maintains, he heralds the worst that the Louis XVI period would do for portraiture.

This the popular Mme. Vigée Lebrun smilingly accomplished. From all French portraiture she stands out as most superficial and effeminate. Students of her time are indebted to her for a volume or two of Memoirs, which provide quite interesting detail as to the social customs and temper of those grievous days. As any subscription to the fund of art analysis, organised by artists who have perpetuated in print their thoughts, these Memoirs are valueless. Admitting, as we must, that they are but the cooked-up fragments of her recollections sent to table by some hack journalist, yet their utter deficiencies of criticism worth remark must be held to reflect largely her original attitude. As they read, they are the petty record, in the main, of personal vanity; and judging by the authentic portraits we know of the lady, these records probably are mainly fiction. Be that how it may, we would willingly forego the delight of reading on innumerable pages demure references to her beauty, her marvellous genius, and desolating

*Drouais* *Photo. Giraudon*

THE DAUPHINE
*(Chantilly)*

effect, for an unpicturesque record of actuality and simple observation.

Born in 1755, "I scribbled everywhere on all my copybooks and on my comrades' too," at an astoundingly early age; the very walls did not escape. A plain child she was her mother's dismay, her father's pet. When the latter died in 1768, her mother married an avaricious jeweller, and she managed to attend Briard's studio, and later Doyen's. Greuze and Joseph Vernet also aided her with criticisms. By now it seems she had become a striking beauty and a notable artistic prodigy. The sum of Vernet's counsel was, Pursue Nature and fly mannerism, "which I have ever done." In 1776 she married Lebrun the picture-dealer, a match that gave her much subsequent trouble when she was applicant for membership of the Academy. For so suspect to artists were art-dealers, even then, that any contact was deemed disqualifying. But not only thus was the business unlucky. Addicted to low company, Lebrun seems to have annexed his wife's earnings in order to ensue it. These must have been considerable, however, for following Marie Antoinette's lead in 1779 all fashionable Paris, especially *les parisiennes*, swarmed to her studio. In this matter of the Queen, it is

quite interesting to compare our painter's published portrait with her recorded impression of her majesty—the one so tame and bourgeois, the other filled with the indescribable dignity and sovereign bearing of the Austrian princess. Timidly, we may suppose, dropping some hint of her admiration, she had this comment from the queen, which for its philosophy is worth recording. "Yes, but how insolent I should be called, were I not queen?" Before Mme. Lebrun's easel passed in ceaseless procession the royal children. The young dauphin would sing while posing, mighty proud of what struck the painter as a raucous accomplishment. "How d'you think I sing?" he asked. "Oh, like a prince, Monseigneur." Madame la Princesse de Lamballe likewise sat to her, that gallant lady whose fate in the September massacres, at the hands of the satyr negro Delorme and the butcher Grison, will remain one of the indelible smears upon mankind.

All through this part of the Memoirs ominous incidents thrust out their heads at us: the snarling hatred of a mob at bay, but yet kept down; insults screamed into the carriages of the noblesse, sulphur thrown into their cellars. The incident of the unknown man fainting at

a noble's park gates, and the discovery in his pockets of seditious handbills; of his being handed over to the soldiery, and of the secret understanding between them and their prisoner. All Paris felt the sinister heaving of the earth beneath its feet, and none knew where to turn. Demoralised by fear our painter went to Les Invalides, under the care of the governor, de Sombreuil, who was busy trying to secrete the guns and ammunition in his charge. His men of course gave him away, and he only escaped slaughter at La Force, in the September butchery, by the heroic devotion of his daughter, who submitted to the price demanded—that she should drink a cup of the blood flowing in the kennel from the heap of mutilated aristocrats. For the culmination of the growing storm, beneath whose portentous clouds delicately nurtured women, fearful for their unborn, went stricken with panic, and even the most reckless cast suspicious glances round, Mme. Vigée did not wait. In disguise and the company of a Jacobin hooligan, who that day had made the march from Versailles in which the king was brought to town, and who boasted of the jewellery he had stolen and of other deeds, accompanied by her little daughter,

she fled South, and reached Italy, November 1789.

Here conscientiously she "did," as perhaps she put it, practically every gallery she came to; but on any but trivial matters her Memoirs are dumb. The Bolognese, as we might suppose, were her great attraction. At Rome, which she gained in December, she met Angelica Kauffman, and was immensely struck by the outrageous street noises: always, indeed, she had been sensitive to noises, and had made of them a classification; some were round, she thought, and the worst angular. In 1790 she went to Naples where, as ever, she was respectfully welcomed. At times indeed she lets us hear of people moved to tears by the spectacle in the flesh of such a prodigious artist. At Naples she painted everybody who was anybody; the Comtesse Catherina Skavronsky, Lady Hamilton, and the court of Queen Maria Caroline, sister of Marie Antoinette. It is in her verbal descriptions of celebrated people that Mme. Lebrun most amuses; in them she shows a happy, shrewd observation. Of the famous du Barry, whom she painted and knew well before the Revolution, she has given a clear suggestion: tall, fully yet still beautifully made, with a charming face

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AND HER DAUGHTER
*(By Madame Vigée Lebrun. The Louvre)*

and fair curly childish hair. The favourite's manners and her kindliness much impressed her, though her mind seemed more natural than her manners. "Her way of looking at one was *celui d'une coquette*, with drooping eyelids never raised, and her pronunciation was lisping like a child's."

From Naples our artist of a "fragile futile art," as de Nolhac says, returned to Rome in 1791, for six weeks; then back to paint a weak flattery of Naples' queen. Leaving Rome finally in '92, she journeyed through Italy to Venice. The eve of her departure Madame la Tante Victoire told her of Louis XVI's projected flight; that night she heard her Jacobin manservant singing gleefully at the news he mysteriously had received of the failure of the scheme. Her plan to re-enter France was rudely thrown down by news of the 10th of August massacre of the Swiss Guards in the Tuileries; so on she went to Vienna, and thence in '95 to St Petersburg. That most complex, primal, and remarkable person the Empress Catherine she never painted, owing, doubtless, to her imperial dissatisfaction with Mme. Lebrun's portrait of her grandchildren; to this portrait the Empress curtly said, "She has made

my pretty children ninnies." *Viâ* Berlin, by 1802, Mme. Vigée had returned to Paris, where she found a warm reception, and her husband, who had taken the precaution, when the Terror was at its fiercest, of divorcing his Royalist wife. Save for a visit to England from 1802 to 1805, and to Switzerland in 1808 and '09, she passed the rest of her long life in Paris and its environs.

Her English experiences are amusing reading: from house to house in quest of quiet she fared; from "Beck" Street to Portman Square, whence a neighbour's bird and the rumour of buried bodies in her own cellar drove her to Madox Street. The dismal spectacle of an English "rout" vastly entertained her. Reynolds seemed to her "unfinished," and she alleges that he remarked on a portrait of hers, priced at 80,000 francs, that he would have been paid for it 100,000 francs, but that he could not have done so well. Her English visit she nicely rounded off by putting in his place an English painter who had ventured to criticise French painting in general, and Mme. Vigée's in particular. Having achieved an incredible tale of pictures she died in 1842. Her Memoirs, which might have been valuable evidence on the academic troubles and death throes under David's pres-

sure, preserve on these an inscrutable silence; and the name of Mme. Labille Guiard (1749–1803), her well-known rival, is never mentioned in them. In no province of painting was the Davidian influence more needed than in portraiture as practised by Mme. Vigée Lebrun.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### JACQUES LOUIS DAVID

1748–1825

WHILE Fragonard, clad in his long smock tied up with tags of string, was pottering about the Louvre, *démodé* and obscure, his supplanter, Louis David, in the old church of the Collège de Cluny, which he honoured by using as a studio, was coldly busy on his official panoramas, the "Sacre et Intronisation de l'Empereur" and "La Distribution des Aigles." Knight of the Legion of Honour, the Emperor's *premier peintre*, Citizen David has gone far on the bosom of the stream beneath the bridge since we saw him humbly asking M. Fragonard's consent to his completion of La Guimard's decorations. He has been at first a Roman, and then a sort of Greek; a regicide, a burning Robespierriste. He has thumped tubs, has just escaped the guillotine, and sat in prison. His last manœuvre was adroitly trimming sail to meet the change of wind—a piece of seamanship that included

throwing overboard young Topino Lebrun, who might have compromised him in the budding Emperor's eyes. And so while young Topino climbed the scaffold because he could not see the subtle point distinguishing King Louis from Emperor Napoleon, our perceptive David has ridden into a snug port.

The actual build of this man beneath his cloak-like name is difficult to grasp. It were no bad plan to strip off that cloak which so exaggerates his shape, and attempt to make out justly his proportions. In a loose, general way he is often said to be the reformer of the French school, from which he struck off the shackles of a decayed convention. Similarly he is said to have replaced a pack of lies with sane and austere truths. Historical analysis of his actual performance does not support this view of him. The other general view is that he was the implacable almighty enemy of French art, on which he clamped anachronism and a convention far worse than that he remedied. Both views, in short, postulate importantly the prominence of his position as the leader of the neo-renaissance movement, and each is the victim of distinct misconception. As a matter of fact, indeed, Louis David's position in French art is really

personal, political, and inflated by wholly irrelevant circumstances for which he mainly is responsible. So that while living, owing to his skill in self-advertisement, he reaped an immense and glorious prestige, when dead he came in for all the odium that naturally attached to the eminence on to which he engineered himself. And the interesting point is this, that in his capacity as innovator and artist he is in no wise entitled either to the glorious prestige or the consequent hostility.

For it is not extravagant to maintain that, but for the extrinsic "puff," if we may use the word, he got from his froward revolutionary behaviour, he would have done his worst, or best, in comparative obscurity; filling in the annals of the neo-classic school the sort of place Vincent, Regnault or Gérard occupy. But as things went he was able skilfully to exalt himself in the gaze of a crude philistine public as a regenerating hero. Yet there was, as small reflection shows, nothing new about his pursuit of the antique, save perhaps an extravagance and culmination of misconception. On the road with him a crowd of mediocre painters were filling sketch-books with the antique, and had been for those many years. The tradition of the antique of course went back to the

Humanists and Squarcione's *bottega*, but a fillip had been given it by the fresh discoveries at Pompeii and at Herculaneum. The credit of this little new renaissance goes not unjustly to the man who in literature may claim to be a sort of prototype of David—Winckelmann. His expeditions to Naples in 1760–62 started the new fashion which, with that remarkable readiness new fashion ever finds, all artistic Europe followed.

One of the first French painters to come into this fresh field was Hubert Robert, the decorative landscapist, whose celebrated vogue in Paris, with his panels of Roman ruins, extracted from Diderot in 1768 a grave and just rebuke. At this rate, he wrote, our artists will never equal *les anciens*, because, in direct opposition to their practice, we are not studying from Nature nor seeking Nature's beauty. On the contrary, we are but copying a copy, are looking at Nature across the interpretation of the antique. Yet earlier, of course, and disconnected from this Winckelmann-inspired enthusiasm, was the solitary application of Vien to an austere classicism; he who in 1750, but for the support of the broad-minded Boucher, had been excluded from the Académie. From his atelier, all set with equal impulse on the new pursuit, came Menageot

and Vincent, Regnault and David. It was, in fact, the regular business of the students to imitate an imitation, and David was but one of them—a little more proficient with his tools, and, as a man, of other fibre. It was that part of him, narrow, vindictive, and high-tempered, yet cold enough to calculate his opportunities, rather than his superiority as artist, that hoisted him so high.

If then, as we have seen, he was no innovator battling a way through new, dense paths, how clear are his claims to have brought truth back to French art? To us they seem but dim, for though it is beyond dispute that the tendency of that time towards a corrective austerity and purity of line in itself was healthy, as a *contre pieds* to the miserable flamboyance and weakly amorous convention of the decayed Boucher school, yet as far as truth went, David in his most eminent productions afforded nothing comparable with the truth of Watteau, Fragonard, and Chardin. And whereas *l'école Davidienne* died painfully in a *cul de sac*, the revelations made by Boucher and Watteau, Fragonard and Chardin, in form, in line, in tone and atmosphere, are still potent in our midst.

Louis David, we will confess, seems to us a curiously exaggerated figure, pathetically blind,

intolerably egotistic; standing out from his school on the heap of mischievous influence his irrelevant political and personal prominence alone made possible. He and his school are an unparalleled instance of sheer waste; waste of precious years and precious talent that in other channels had been really useful. David himself, but for the fatal popularity he gained, and his absurd and solemn self-conceit, might have gone far; his portraits and his general views of art, as distinct from his practice, reveal a certain taste. Gros, had he not imbibed the poison against which he could not long struggle, had been perhaps an artist of independent and imaginative achievement. And Monsieur Ingres would have been himself naïvely uninspired and wonderfully observant; capable perhaps of assimilating Raphael, had his artistic digestion not been first congested by Davidian diet.

Born in 1748 Jacques Louis David was intended for an architect. His importunity, however, won the day, and, like Fragonard before him, he was taken to Boucher's studio. That master liking his beginnings, but not caring for a pupil, sent him on to Vien, who we have seen was specialising in neo-classicism. Against his *froideur* the old Boucher in his witty way felt bound to warn

the young aspirant. Under Vien, with Menageot and Regnault, David made quick progress, in 1766 being admitted as student to the Académie. Arrogant and sensitive, he was not the stuff of which a good student is made. Failing in competition for the Prix de Rome in 1770, and the three succeeding years, he found the grievance that so long and so vindictively he nursed. At last in 1774 he gained the prize, and the next year went with Vien, the new Director of the French Academy, to Rome. As showing the fashion of that time and his original attitude towards it, his reply to Cochin the engraver, who urged him not to succumb "like so many of the others" to the new classic fad, is instructive. "The antique won't influence me," he said, "it's too cold and lifeless." Thus ignorant of his doom and with raw malleable ideas he went south to Rome; gaping at Correggio, struck dumb by the Bolognese. Michelangelo and Raphael seemed to his crude intelligence a sort of stepping-stone to the Caracci. Perplexed and lost he wandered in the streets or out into the Campagna, and back again to Valentin and the Caracci. At last, however, he settled down to the antique, characteristically basing his style of drawing on a sculptor's, young Lamarie's. Mournfully preg-

nant this of the main evil of his school — the sculptor's vision forced into the painter's medium. During his Italian studentship we get a fairly open view of him: seclusive and morose, constantly glancing round to see that no fellow-student was copying him; gradually absorbing, whole and undigested, well-known groups of the antique, which would turn up undisguised in the pictures he sent to Paris, pictures remarkable for their frieze-like lack of planes and sombre night-like shadows.

Returned to Paris in 1781 immediately he was successful; his portrait of Prince Potocki, though infected with his usual unatmospheric shininess, at once displaying his real *métier*. For as a portraitist David, despite the reflected influence of the misconceived antique, reached singularly high. We cannot but speculate on the height he might have gained had he not so solemnly mistaken his real bent and given but scornful attention to this "unclassic" branch. But as it was, finding the public ignorantly enthusiastic for the new vogue, and satisfying it by the closeness of his imitation of the letter of the antique (his popularity was no doubt due, as is that of inferior Dutch genre and English Academic painters, to the "finish" of his work), he made the most of

it. Graciously he took a wealthy wife, and opened with a proper pomp a school.

But Paris was not really attuned to the marvellous tone of his great inspiration—"Le Serment des Horaces." For its accouchement he returned to Rome, bringing in his train three of his pupils: in those days, too, advertisement was not despised; nor for that matter unrewarded, as all Rome crowded to his studio to see the offspring of this pomp. Round the picture sage antiquaries wrangled on *precieux* points of antiquarian chronology, as at the present date the pictures of Academicians are pored over for their marbles and historical exactitudes of costume.

This picture, "Les Horaces," too well known for us to venture on analysis, by no means was uniquely classic when it appeared at the Salon of '85 in Paris. There, although heralded with prudent care by David's students, it had been rather badly hung; another case, he thought, of the oppressive jealousy of the Academy. Nor was it altogether welcomed in the press. At this same Salon, Menageot, Suvée, and Vincent all were represented with Alcibiades, and Cleopatras, petrified precisely in this manner; and two years later, in 1787, it seemed an open question in the press whether David, Regnault, or Vincent were the

best man. We must, on the other hand, recall the unstinted praise our master Reynolds gave to David's picture of that year, his "Socrates." "It is," he wrote, "the greatest endeavour in art since Michelangelo and Raphael; it had been a credit to Athens in the time of Pericles." At the same time we cannot forget that Reynolds's conception of Periclean art was ill-founded on Hellenistic copies, or that his excursions into the matter of abstract ideal were unfortunate. However this may be, it did not strike David as, one might almost say, good business that MM. Suvée, Regnault, and Vincent should challenge his supremacy. The matter later had his full attention.

The Salon of 1789, that celebrated year, afforded the admiring public a choice exposition of their painter's sense of fitness; we do not say originality. His "Paris and Helen" of that year was, as far as arrangement and poses went, a frank adaptation of the Herculaneum "Cassandra and Apollo," painted with the brighter palette his sojourn in 1787, among the Flemish pictures in Antwerp and Brussels, had discovered to him. With it was exhibited his "Brutus," which is for us an important instance of those irrelevant causes of his prominence already dwelt upon.

This picture, dealing with the patriotism of Junius Brutus, who put to death his sons because of their devotion to the Royalist Tarquin cause, had been commissioned at a date when it would have held no topical allusion. Owing, however, to delays its appearance synchronised with the political upheaval of '89. Its author thus immediately became the artistic apostle of *La Patrie et la Liberté*, a rôle he played for all that it was worth.

For in the general enthusiasm for reform and revolution there must be place, he thought, for settling his long-standing account with the Académie. A crowd of malcontents was at his back, members who disliked the ruling clique in the Académie, associates, and the horde of "outsiders" who were debarred from showing in the Salons. The rights and wrongs of the situation must not concern us here; enough to note that ruthlessly David advanced upon that honoured institution, which for two centuries had incalculably served French art, until in the fateful 1793 he drove the Académie into the streets. Nor did he restrict his energies to matters artistic, busying himself to acquire a public position from which he might exercise his anti-academic influence. To him as an artistic revolutionary

citizen the post of Master of the Ceremonies fell; he had to organise the pageants held in celebration of conspicuous Patriotisms. To him on this score, and because of his famous "Horaces" and "Brutus," came the rank of Official Painter to the Jacobins, and their commission of a picture to perpetuate in glory the Oath of the Tennis Court.

By September '92, third on the poll, our painter was elected deputy of the Convention, and in a little while his fierce hatred of the Girondiste Académie had swept him into the extreme Montagnarde wing. From this point all too quickly he seems to have been drawn into the wheel. His old rival Suvée, now Director of the French Academy in Rome, he assailed with the pregnant epithet "detestable aristocrat," and thrust him out of office. Then 'mid pillaging and murder that institution itself he had abolished. Early in 1793 a mob of "outside" painters stormed the "Bastille of an Académie," and in August of that year his foes were finally wiped out. David's last bitter shot at them has been preserved. "In the name of humanity, in the name of all that is due to the love of Art, above all for your love of youth, let us utterly destroy the Académies which, intolerably harmful, are impossible under a free rule." What with his war on the Académies,

his official post as pageant master, his private jealousies, his signing of death-warrants, and his memorial pictures of the various patriotic martyrs our Citizen David's hands were full. To the Terror at least he owes his Marat portrait, in which, uplifted by a primitive emotion, he soars above the insufferable insipidity of his ideal. This same chance of an escape the pathetic little Bara gave him, and in that prone figure, now in the Avignon gallery, David just touched Infinity.

Tasting a sort of savage unreined power, infected by contact with the hot breath of butchery that swept through France, David's was not the nature to resist temptation. And it is typical of the man that he should parade a sublime patriotism and love of liberty to cover his despotism, and in what seem to have been questions of personal spite should profess a smug incorruptibility. His artistic rivals, Regnault and Vincent, were swept from his course on the charge of anæmic patriotism. The episode of Emélie Chalgrin, Joseph Vernet's daughter, viewed most charitably, seems to us yet more abominable. She had been left in Paris by her husband, the Comte de Provence's architect, who with his patron had fled to Brussels. Baulked of the prince, the Robespierristes ransacked Mme. Chalgrin's house

and found some candles marked in cipher and sealed with the *emigré's* seal. At once, of course, the poor woman was arrested. Her young brother Carle ran to his friend Louis David, imploring his all-powerful intervention. Though we may question the tale Durande publishes as to Mme. Chalgrin's having at one time repulsed David's intentions on her, still his conduct requires some motive. At any rate to young Vernet he struck a vile and pious posture. "*I* painted 'Junius Brutus'; *I* cannot beg of Robespierre. The tribunal tries fairly; your sister is an aristocrat for whom I will not stir." When, however, the spectacle of his friend's prayers sufficiently had stroked his egotism, relenting he obtained an order of release. The urgency of the situation seems, however, to have been beneath his consideration. He kept in his pocket the reprieve until Mme. Chalgrin had made the journey, so swift in those days, from her prison to the guillotine.

With the fall of Robespierre, David, of course, came in for his share of personal and bitter persecution. Thermidor 13, an. ii., as in their pompous folly they called July 31, 1794, David was violently accused. With sweat streaming down him, pale with terror, he essayed a stammering defence. His five months' imprison-

ment did not assuage the grudge his fellow-artists bore him; they brought against him seventeen charges of various offences. In October 1776 he finally emerged from prison. Thus emerged he set to work upon his "Rape of the Sabines." The comparative unpopularity he had enjoyed, the opportunities for meditation confinement had afforded between them led him to discover what one of his students, far brighter and more logical than he, long before had found —that Græco-Roman art could hardly stand as the source of the antique. This young student, Maurice Quai, had in the old days of "Les Horaces" headed a sort of faction in the studio, which for inspiration pushed back towards Greece. The matter is only important in that it reveals the dulness of perception and logical application our David had, for it made singularly little difference whether he imitated Græco-Roman or mediocre Greek statuary. Lacking the imagination and the taste to suspect that antique art was but a symbol of life, a symbol executed mainly in the round, intended to be played upon by atmosphere and light, and conceiving of it as a definite fixed ideal, the final mould, he transferred it bag and baggage to the flat. More than this, too, then he was condemned to

PORTRAIT OF MADAME SERIZAIT

*(By David. The Louvre)*

suppose that what he saw in Rome or Naples really was Greek art; and as we know, when in 1816 he became aware of Lord Elgin's finds, he wished he might start afresh once more. None the less, we must suspect that he would as conspicuously have failed to pierce beneath the lovely letter and reach the Infinity of Phidias's spirit. For his "Sabines" the young bourgeois and their sisters posed in the nude, since David could not find professional models suitable. For these devoted people it was a sort of consecration to the Great New Art thus to have helped their Genius. At this date, 1795, appeared one of his finest portraits, the "M. Seriziat" in the Louvre. In a rather beautiful interpretation of young manly ardour and inspired refinement this portrait, despite its technical poverty, ranks high. His own portrait of this time, done whilst he sat in prison, remarkably reveals him; young looking for his forty-six years, inquisitive and narrow, with unhappy, anxious gaze and nervous mouth, a little crooked: a fanatic's face.

After Robespierre, Napoleon. To him David had gone for refuge in the days of his political downfall, and after the Campo-Formio Treaty had again brought himself to his notice, gaining thereby permission to paint him. When home

from the Egyptian campaign Napoleon sat to him again. David's suggestion for the portrait is worth recording. "I will paint you," he said, "fighting sword in hand." "Not so, my good David; I don't win battles with my sword. I will be painted sitting unmoved on a high-spirited horse." Here we see the naïvely commonplace, almost, one might say, "gallery" conception of the popular painter rebuked by a far greater mind. It is on record further how Napoleon, talking with him, bluntly and perceptively destroyed the theories of ideal pose that David had put forward. By 1800 the artist was at the height of fame, the favourite of the First Consul and the people. And he is no exception to the general rule that court painters and popular painters are famous not for the rarer revelations, but because they paint on the level of contemporary understanding. Thus when they fall in a crude period of taste it is by the obvious they appeal, the literal and dull. If it be in a period of decadent and profligate ideals it is by the flamboyant, the voluptuous and occasionally the witty. The main difference between the Boucher convention and the Davidian is that one was wanton and the other dull; the sincerity of the latter being balanced by the spirit of the former.

Just lightly we may touch that sad business of the Arena-Caracci conspiracy in which David's young pupil, Topino Lebrun, was tangled. Charged with complicity, the young man, who seems to have designed the weapons of the would-be assassins, called David to stand up for him. The matter, indeed, was not regarded very seriously, and excuses for the ardent youth, who had not the easy conscience of his master in accepting an emperor, having killed a king, came easily. But David, whose generous championship had cleared Topino, found nothing better to say than that as a painter he showed promise. Casanova, another pupil, similarly called upon by the accused, mumbled the same damning evasions. As in the other case Mme. Chalgrin suffered, so now Topino. The matter to concern us is not the technical point of law, but the chilling absence of a generous manliness.

Napoleon fallen, David, Knight of the Legion of Honour, *premier peintre de l'empereur*, author of divers official groups, may have been a little *chagriné* by the indulgence Louis XVIII at first showed him. By now, too, his old academic foes had so far re-formed as to harass him in flank. With the return of Napoleon in March 1815, David loyally saluted him and

received him in the studio to exhibit his lately finished "Leonidas," and incidentally to acquire the Commandership of the Legion of Honour. Then securely feeling that with Napoleon all was well, he put his name to the Acts excluding the Bourbon succession. After Waterloo, however, this and his other notorious signature of January 20, 1793, overcame the clemency of Louis XVIII. Not that David expected otherwise, for retiring in time to Brussels there he spent the rest of his much-honoured days. His final period of work, embarrassed by the concomitants of age, is marked by heaviness of form, a travesty of the Flemish schemes of colour, and sluggish composition. Yet to the end his portraits perpetuate that curious discrepancy of his achievement. His last picture, "Mars disarmed by Venus," proved the knell of the school. Exhibited in Paris in 1825 by his enthusiastic foolish faction, intended as the final mark of his supremacy, it threw their carefully erected building to the ground. On the débris the triumphant Romantistes danced. December 29, 1825, correcting an engraving of his "Leonidas," he died, aged seventy-seven.

Callous and calculating, dull and obstinate,

lacking, we must think, the saving sense of humour, yet from the unswerving devotion of his students we must deduce something noble in his character. His portraits, and the thing he would have expressed in his "Leonidas" had his means answered to his meaning, show us that when off his guard he could see humanly, and that he thought at times poetically. In his recorded precepts to his students we clearly read an earnest intelligence. Constantly he is urging them to be sincere, to avoid theatricality, to fly from a conventional rendering of the model. In his genuine admiration of old masters his taste was wide, embracing van Ostade, Teniers, Subleyras, and Rembrandt. He it was who said, "Ce sont les gris qui font la peinture;" he was convinced that in his "Sabines" he had made living his antique models in place of animated copies; he executed his "Amour and Psyche" during his exile as a challenge and a proof that he did not "improve on, but only copied Nature." Unhappy solemn man, so lacking the vocation of artist as not to see, so satisfied with the blind ideas of his time as to crystallise them in all their dulness in his own work and person. Conceiving his "Leonidas" as a serene hero unostentatiously awaiting glorious death, he por-

trayed him as a self-conscious sentimentalist. In place of his "living models" he has given us the suspended animation of puppets in violent action; in lieu of life a tableau on the boards. Incapable of interpretation, he thought the external measurements and silhouette of a debased antique supplied the ideal mould; into which, with all the cold obstinacy of his narrow nature, he crushed the tender body of pictorial art, softening the impact with nothing that, like atmosphere or soul, should imply imagination.

# CHAPTER XXIX

## JEAN DOMINIQUE AUGUSTE INGRES

1780–1867

When in 1825, pushed over by those whose great anxiety it was to shore it up, the Davidian idol fell to bits, there was room for one who, trained in that school but gifted with a fine imagination, might have given to Art that for which she had to await Puvis de Chavannes. For when David was seen to be a failure, and Romanticism had all the advantages of a future and of exuberant youth, the hour must have been propitious for a sort of coalition. But feelings ran so high, and in the dust of his fall David no doubt looked so disreputable and outworn to the eyes of the opposing faction, that no one seems to have been sufficiently clear-headed to suspect that, by wedding the spirit of classic Art (which after all was what poor David had been aiming at) with the essential expression of modern life, a most beautiful child might have been born.

We must admit, of course, that in the man who

should have brought this to pass large qualities were indispensable. For one thing he must have retained his individuality under David, and must have had the imagination to discover the truth amidst the falsehoods of his revered master. Thus he would have emerged exalted with a sense of the real spirit of the antique, its large simplicity and repose, its subtle movement and elusive mystery. Then too he should have been a true son of those times, imbued with all the tragedy and splendid hope of France. Thus he would have been at once passionate and austere, tender and stern, gravely virile, and sympathetically perceptive. And in his art much of this had been reflected, in it some of the deepest emotions of modern feeling had been cast in a universal mould, Pheidian, Shakespearean, or what you will. Géricault died too soon for us to form an opinion of his ultimate course. Eugène Delacroix was not this sort of man, and Jean Dominique Auguste Ingres was of a wholly different calibre.

In scrutinising him we may no more disregard the fatal influence on him of Louis David than must we charge to this latter what is really due to Ingres' lack of the vocation. While we cannot doubt that David indelibly stamped his cast

of thought, we cannot, on the other hand, gloss over the fact that as an imaginative and creative artist he has no sort of title. We should moreover bear in mind that though David was, as we have seen, by no means an innovator, yet he can claim a certain credit in that he actually begat his own mistaken shallow views. Ingres, on the contrary, meekly adopted David's ailing child. Into his orphanage then he brought first a Primitive Infant and then a Raphaelesque, and of these three, each retaining his distinct individuality, they made no end of discord in the house. But over them with an immense gravity, and so wrapped up in his system that he did not hear the clamour, "Monsieur Ingres" presided.

Born at Montauban in 1780 he had the advantage of an artist for his father. That gentleman indeed, judging from his son's filial eulogy, must have been of many parts—a painter, a sculptor, an architect, and decorator. "Had he, as I, had the benefit of the highest instruction," writes our Ingres, "he would have been the first painter of our day." With his father he studied until thirteen years old, when he went to a sort of provincial academy in Toulouse, where *inter alia* he practised landscape painting. But when in 1796 he came in for the privilege of studentship *chez*

"the greatest of our masters," his humble acquirements in his father's and the Toulouse studios were thrown out on the rubbish heap; for Louis David was a narrow man, walking in a narrow alley, with no tolerance for other points of view. For our part, however, we suspect that what Ingres had assimilated in the provinces really was the nucleus of that small saving individuality he just preserved. It is at least quite certain that in his Prix de Rome picture of 1801 a rebel individuality stirs amid the evidences of a sedulous imitation of David's mannerisms. This personal quality is a disconcerting naturalistic observation which could not fuse with an ideal formula. Such an intrusion upon the well-ordered and inanimate suavity of his school cannot have commended itself to the despotic chief. Beyond the fact that David employed the young man on the accessories of his "Mme. Recamier" we do not learn that he took much interest in him.

Reflecting on the matter we must be struck by the similarity of David to Ingres in this naturalistic tendency of vision. In the portraits by both painters—works, we must remember, they considered as relatively trivial—we have a strong expression of it. But David was by far the finer

portraitist in virtue of the imagination, albeit unwillingly, he possessed. Ingres, on the other hand, was so objective as to rival the camera. One has but to turn over a portfolio of his drawings to take in that almost by every sitter he was completely baffled, kept at bay. Beneath the defiant mask he had no probe to penetrate; no imagination to infuse life and human warmth. With hard, dog-like eyes and mechanically simpering lips his sitters remain distinctly unknown to us; they might be members of one large bourgeois family. The nearest approach he makes to sentiment is mild sentimentality, and for vitality he is dependent on the adventitious peculiarity of a twisted mouth or a cast eye; striking accidents that his mirror-like rendering well can compass. But if this unintellectual accuracy of imitation was at least not inimical to portraiture, when served up concomitant with ideal classicism it made an alien, non-fusible flavour.

Ingres' portrait of himself, aged twenty-four, is an excellent revelation. One would say he was an estimable citizen, of an unctuous, complacent cut; fat, with barely a spark of humour, and capable of an infinity of prose. It were not excessive to declare that the chief vices of this rather pompous man, who stares at us assuredly,

are a pharisaic deafness to conversion, and an aggravated lack of the sense of humour. He gained in 1801 the Prix de Rome, but, like Boucher and Lemoine, was not sent South. So for five years he lived in Paris, working for the publishers, copying in the Louvre, and doing those pencil portraits on which his name will stand. In David's studio he had met Bartolini, the young Italian sculptor, who must have been a sort of rebel in that antique community; for his enthusiasms were bespoken by the pre-Raphael painters, the Florentine quattrocentists. If we run over in our minds the popular masters of his time, the Guidos and the Pieros da Cortona, the Caravagios and all the Bolognese, with just now and then Raphael and Michelangelo, or in the case of an exceptional Prud'hon, Leonardo, and Correggio, we shall realise what a "crank" Bartolini must have seemed to prefer Filippo Lippi and Fra Angelico. He was able, however, to arouse in Ingres a profound veneration for the Primitives, by then to be studied in the Louvre. So our painter learnt to see the letter of their art, and to write it on to David's. That he could read between the lines and recognise the beautiful soul as well as the *probité* of their rendering was not to be expected. Of the portraits of this

Netherlandish and Italian Primitives phase, we may mention that of himself at Chantilly; of his father at Montauban, in company with so many of his drawings; that of La Belle Zélie and of Mme. Rivière; all done between 1801 and 1806, when he went to Rome. The small portrait in the National Gallery, probably of Malibran, and attributed to our painter, is of this school of execution. The fact, however, that the famous singer was not born till 1808 seems to fell the Ingriste attribution. We would submit in support of Professor Holmes's suggestion of Hippolyte Flandrin's responsibility for the charming portrait, that it has an unwonted wit, one might say *espièglerie*. Her mocking, watchful eyes have little kinship with the hard staring orbs of an authentic Ingres.

All this, however, must not detain us. To Rome in 1806 our master went, there to discover that Raphael had said the final word in Art. The use he made of this momentous find is typical. Though he did not take the Umbrian at his worst, still, appropriating his weaknesses of type and unworthiness of gesture, he removed them bodily. Mosaicwise in among the bits of Primitives and Louis David enthusiastically he fitted them. The ensemble of course is as far

from Unity as from Vitality. The figures in his elaborate compositions, studiously placed according to ideal rules, have no heart in their work. Languidly they take up attitudes like actors photographed rehearsing to an empty house. The chief attraction of such canvases arises from illegitimate and unintentional causes. For it is the rather startling bizarre presence, in the midst of all this lifeless arrangement, of some naturalistic accident, some rather trivial modern movement, which is alien from its atmosphere. Thus in the "Thetis," while Zeus sits like an idol, she, with a curiously "alive" effect, reaching upward seems to pinch his chin, to the palpable vexation of a frowning eagle. Thus in his "Œdipus" we recognise, communing with an unconvincing Sphinx, some fat young model standing for a Raphaelesque St John in a pose that David had selected. Raphael remained for Ingres the boundary of Art; he adopted no more children. "What cares he for wealth or fame?" wrote Georges Sand; "for him there is but one verdict in the world—Raphael's, whose ghost looks over his shoulder all the time."

But to go back. At Rome in 1806, to make his living he had to rely upon his pencil portraits. Of these he calculated he turned out some 300

for about £320. His clients mainly came from the foreign colony in Rome. Characteristically, he despised this sort of work, feeling sore that immediate recognition of his position as historical painter lagged. One day a would-be patron, coming for his portrait, knocked at the door and asked, "Does M. Ingres, the portraitist, live here?" Ingres, shouting at him, "No, sir; an artist lives here," shut him out. And anent this same tardy appreciation our young man, with his splendid lack of humour, would quote Beethoven: "God is nearer to me in my art than to others." By 1812, however, he had the influential patronage of Murat, King of the Two Sicilies. In the next year a lady, to whom he had become engaged through the medium of the post, came to Rome to marry him and make his acquaintance. For some thirty-six years she lived with him, supporting him in discouragements, and no doubt applauding his success. She died in 1849, to be succeeded three years later by a second wife, who, having over her august husband of seventy-two the advantage of more than forty years, had not much difficulty in remaining his last wife; retaining what devotion he could spare, whose greatest love, they say, was given to his art.

With the Restoration of 1815 fell Murat and his patronage. For five more years, at work on historical pieces, such as "The Duke of Alva," or "Rogero and Angelica," and numerous portraits, Ingres stayed in Rome. Thence, in 1820, he moved to Florence, to pick up there the threads of his intercourse with Bartolini, and a somewhat uncertain livelihood. At one hour indeed he seriously entertained an offer from an English patron to go to England for two years. In 1821, however, the tide began to flow. The Comte Amadée de Pastorel not only commissioned "The Entry of Charles V," but obtained for him the order for "The Vow of Louis XIII" from the French Ministry of Fine Arts. For his attitude towards himself at this time we may quote a letter: "My work is conceived and executed in a spirit quite different from that of modern times. The great defect of it in my enemies' eyes is its lack of resemblance to theirs. We must await the tardy and equitable verdict of posterity. However, I wish it to be known that my art only recognises the guidance of the masters who flourished in that century when Raphael fixed the indisputable limits of Art. To resemble him, and to take on the torch whence he left it is my one ambition." Well, for

*Ingres* *Photo. Moreau*

PORTRAIT OF CHERUBINI

*(Louvre)*

popular recognition he had not to wait posterity's verdict. In that tardy and equitable business he has rather found what he did not seek, and as for his ambition to resemble David and Raphael, that brought him effectually on the sands. "I shall never," he concludes, "be modest save before Raphael and Nature." He is, indeed, a capital example of those who suffer from an incapability of conversion and convincement, a disease that is of all the most hostile to civilisation. Nothing, we suppose, is more indicative of an inherent and intolerant pharisaism than this, the commonest of complaints.

He took his "Vow of Louis XIII" to Paris for the Salon of 1824, wherein was Delacroix' "Massacre of Scio." Obviously it assured him the cheap title of "The Modern Raphael"; its suavity and sentimentalism, and above all its candid plagiarism, would inspire a percipient public with so happy an idea. In 1825 he was a member of the Institute, charged with the task of sustaining the classical tradition against the onslaught from the Romantic camp. From now his position was official and secure; his life a placid, solemn stream of suave production, to the accompaniment of official decorations. As Director of the French Academy at Rome thither he went in 1834,

returning to Paris six years later. The last twenty-seven years of his long life he passed in Paris, stalwartly holding upright his particular pennon of an ideal, somewhat bitterly and personally withstanding the movement with which principally he identified Delacroix. Indeed, in bitterness fairness became involved, only to be extricated as prejudice. One day, being particularly pleased with a copy of "La Belle Jardinière," he asked who had made it. Learning that it was Delacroix he recoiled, crying "that such a fellow should copy this!" Unaware of the authorship of Delacroix' "Prisoner of Chillon," he much admired the picture; enlightened on the point he found it odious. Delacroix in this respect observed not only his own dignity, but also what nowadays we call the rules of cricket.

Jean Dominique Auguste Ingres, medallist, Senator of the Empire and Grand Officier de la Légion d'Honneur, died aged eighty-seven in 1867, as Edouard Manet and Courbet assumed the mantle that Delacroix had laid aside. Thus the eternal war between age and youth, the accepted and the fresh, what the public can understand and what is as yet above its head, goes on. The particular war in which Ingres was involved is said to have been that of the Classical Ideal *versus* the Romantic

*Ingres* *Photo. Moreau*

LA SOURCE

*(Louvre)*

and the Naturalistic. It must be remembered, all the same, that Ingres' was no idealism in the sense we now employ that term. His was a very material ideal, concerned merely with outward shape and line. For all that he expressed of life he might have been born on some Island of the Blest in an idyllic uneventful age rather than in the Midi nine years before the Revolution. If Raphael Hellenised the Bible, Ingres Raphaelised a Davidian convention; no considerable contribution to Art or thought. His well-known war cry, "Dessein c'est la probité de l'Art" as fully gauges him and his irremediable pharisaism as anything he said or did. It postulates his righteousness and his exclusive monopoly of righteousness; it condemns as dishonest all who could not see in his especial way.

Immensely conscientious and sincere, dedicated helplessly to an idol and a superstition, he deserves our pity; for in all his years of toil he never could have known the joy of revelation and of realising the passionate beauty of life. Occupied with themes pregnant with profound emotion, all his life he wrought in deep ignorance of emotion. Christ questioning the doctors in the Temple, or entrusting Peter with the keys, for him is nothing but the model arranged as Raphael and David

would have suggested. An "Odalisque" with all her possibilities of life is but a woman seen by and gazing at a child. The elaborate and ambitious "Apotheosis of Homer" remains a collection of stock models, imbued with no conception of the importance or the reason of their assembled presence. And while his mental inspiration thus was never quickened, his inspiration as a colourist, a draughtsman, and a painter was never kindled by emotion. His colour too often seems an afterthought coldly attached to its regulated zone; his pigment is serenely lifeless; and his drawing, in the ambitious compositions, fused by no pervading zest, repels by its very accuracy. His greatest value lies in the line drawings he so much despised that he would hide them out of sight. The fastidious taste and delicate line in these command a deep respect, though even they not infrequently are mannered and inexpressive.

Another quality in him to make him admirable is the vast respect he had for Art. On one occasion, entering a dealer's, he surprised a certain well-known general, who, through some folly having tampered with a valuable picture of his possession, had brought its ruin to be restored. Ingres, making no tactful inquiries as to the author of the damage, broke into a passion.

Who, he stormed, had dared to do this murder. Seizing upon the culprit he put it to him, was it not unspeakably abominable that people should think that the mere paying for a picture entitled them to touch the painting. The military celebrity escaped as soon as he was able, confessing that though not a coward he did not like the fury of that little man. But Ingres with his unrivalled knowledge of processes made an exhaustive study of the damaged work and ultimately restored it.

In matters of assessing the relative values of artists a generous custom often maintains of concluding somewhat thus. Had this master in addition to his perseverance, his easy handling and graceful charm, been gifted with the poetry of a Giorgione, the sublimity of Michelangelo, and the peculiar penetration of Rembrandt, he would have ranked with the foremost names in Art. We would not for one moment seem to suspect the probability of so pleasing a result; nor would it surprise us. It appears though more profitable to restrict one's scrutiny to actual qualities definitely possessed. So that we cannot say had Ingres' character and temper and nature been radically different he would have achieved something radically different, with much profit.

But as he appears we see one too considerate of accepted canons, too cautious to exceed them, ever to have been a great artist. Taste he had, but not imagination; keen eyesight, but not perception. In France more than in England the question of his system of instruction was bandied about. He would set his pupils first for some months to copy old masters' drawings and engravings. This method in the hands of an elastic-minded master, and used parallel with an actual study of the round—the life or the antique, is probably the best. It is interesting to remember that W. Hunt, the American artist, the friend and follower of Millet, insists upon its indispensability. Employed narrowly, however, it might be fatal.

For Ingres this must be liberally acknowledged; that to his god *probité* he was, though narrowly, infinitely true. If, as he once said of a van Eyck, a portion of one of his pictures in three hundred years came into an artist's hands the first thing, and perhaps the sum total, he would realise would be, "This was an honest painter!"

# CHAPTER XXX

## EUGÈNE DELACROIX

### 1798–1863

DELACROIX has been dead not fifty years. Thus perspectively he is in a rather awkward place. Firstly, we mean, he is a little too near to us to be seen altogether in just relation to the people standing behind him; secondly, figures in the foreground loom up yet more to obstruct our view of him. So that in some eyes he appears, we think, too big; in others dwarfed by nearer objects. A just recognition of his real environment is needed before he seems to take his proper place in the composition. He had, too, we must recognise, the luck to be the sole survivor of his corps; so that he was seen, breaking out of the dust and smoke that hung over the hottest point of conflict between the Davidian veterans and the young reactionaries, to carry forward its flag. But within that curtain the real leaders died or were taken prisoners. Our recent discussion of David renders needless here any pause

to examine his ideal. Everything, we remember, battle, murder, or Sabine rape, had to be performed to slow classic music. The antique was taken, on the surface level of a decadent period, to have finally established the canon of ideal beauty; to conform with which pictorial art mercilessly was compressed into an alien mould. No subject (save in cases of vulgar portraiture) was fit to be touched unless culled from the classic poets or the Dictionary of Antiquities.

Only one of David's vassals had ventured out of the benumbed dulness of his marble halls into the sunny light of the world about him. Terrified at his boldness, or perhaps unable to bear the actuality of life after his long inurement to suspended animation and ideal canons, he shrank back into his habitual atmosphere and there perpetrated dreadful things. Gros' life, indeed, is melancholy reading. Born in 1771, he came to manhood in the appalling days of the Revolution. By nature effeminately nervous he fled from David's school in Paris to Italy, where in Napoleon's camp he was able to throw off the fatal classic obsession, and take a healthy interest in the life around him. The apex of his art was "Les Pestiférés de Jaffa" (1804) and "La Bataille d'Eylau" (1808), subjects in which modern life and suffer-

ing were treated in a way unprecedented in the French school, save for de Troy's "Plague at Marseilles." Returned to the heel of David, as we have said, he degenerated into the worst type of official painter. The younger school, which in Gros had recognised a leader, assailed him with bitter taunts as a traitor who had sold his art for lucre. Baron Gros, nervously effeminate, and cut to the quick by these, went out in 1836 and drowned himself.

Géricault, on the other hand, was no Davidian; rather he was of the young men who always arise to look questioningly up at successful authority. Born in 1791, his nature seemed tinged by the darkness of his first years. In turn he weighed the worth of Carle Vernet and David's lieutenant, Guerin, and found them far too light. Starting with an extraordinary vitality of draughtsmanship, by long practice before the Old Masters in the Louvre he acquired a considerable mastery of paint. Into his well-known "Chasseur à Cheval" and "Cuirassier Blessé" of 1813, he put not only this mastery, but also what struck the thoughtful as a profound reflection of the tragedy of France, her hard cruelty and her heroic sufferings. A modern melancholy is the recurrent note in Géricault,

but it is an universal note and typical, not parochial. His most remarkable achievement in that day of petrified "Amours et Psyches" and icy goddesses and tedious gods was his presentment of the "Raft of the *Medusa*," whose ghastly sufferings had just thrilled France. Launched from the ship with 149 passengers, after twelve days it was found with but twelve left. In dignity of sentiment and in the harmony between the drama of the *motif* and the passion of the brushwork this was a brutal shock to the Davidians. In place of pursuing his advantage, however, obsessed by the spirit of craving discontent, Géricault came to England. Here in a black mood he attempted suicide, and was only induced to promise to desist from the effort by Charlet's intervention, who, knowing well his man, thus put it: "This, you know, is not your first attempt, and if your mind is set on it, well, we can't prevent you. But look here, you are religious. And if thus you come before the Judgment, what will you have to say? You know, you haven't only dined." A statement but too true. His death in 1824, hastened by injuries from a fall from his horse, was the abrupt end of a too reckless pace.

The third precursor of what became known

as the Romantic movement was Richard Bonington, the English painter, with whom intimately Delacroix was related, and from whom he drew considerable inspiration. Born in 1801, he died before he had attained the pitch towards which surely he was making. If he strike us as superficial we must remember that not rarely he reached Infinity, and that when but twenty-six he died.

Delacroix, then, when he reached production found the soil quite ready; he had not to turn the first hard clod. And at the other end, when he put away his palette, he was nearly seventy, whereas Bonington and Géricault had died in the springtime of their achievement. Thus, we cannot but suppose, had Géricault and Bonington persisted in their development that Fate cut short, Delacroix had loomed less large. But at the same time, bearing in mind his lack of the advantages his successors have enjoyed, his position as a pioneer, and the brunt of attack he bore, we cannot lightly say, as has been said, that he is *démodé*. From his very cradle he seemed to be reserved for some unusual fate. In eluding death by fire he narrowly escaped drowning, both perils due to negligent *bonnes*. Next taking these matters under his personal

supervision he swallowed a whole grape, and only just was saved from fatal choking; then he took down some oxide of copper, which, too, was unsuccessful. At two and a half he hung himself, in emulation of some picture of a gallows-bird, to be cut down at the last gasp. His school career very properly was chequered with scribbled-over copy-books. But, as a matter of fact, he did not contemplate Art with much interest before he was seventeen. Then he entered Guerin's studio, where he was treated to perfect indifference, and as far as academic successes count was a capital failure. His education, however, was none the less *en route:* chiefly in the Louvre, *via* the Old Masters. Here first, with Thales Fielding (the brother of Copley), who taught him water-colour painting, he met Bonington. The significance of his assiduous study of the Old Masters must not be missed. Among art students and young painters of to-day a consummate ignorance and neglect of the tradition obtains; it is, indeed, a nice point whether in any profession students are as ignorant of all that pertains to their business as are the young gentlemen who set out to revolutionise art. In their minds it seems pleasantly established that Messrs. Manet and Sargent have cut modern

painting free of a tedious and old-fashioned past. But Géricault and Delacroix, the pioneers of Romanticism, no less than Constable or Mr Clausen, revered the continuity of art, and knew that thus only could they express themselves.

In straitened but not picturesquely ragged circumstances Delacroix struggled on until 1822, when in the face of Guerin's opposition he exhibited his "Dante and Virgil," and with it scored his first success. This picture, and the next important canvas he sent to the Salon, in 1824, the State bought. As is the custom, Delacroix is usually commiserated on the score of the indifference and neglect shown him by the authorities. As far as we can discover this is an exaggerated view, tallying in this respect with the similar statements made as to Constable and Turner. As a matter of fact Delacroix comparatively was lucky; his first two pictures of a marked anti-Academic standard were at once State-purchased. Can we, scanning our celebrated Chantrey Fund purchases, show a like broad-minded patronage of Whistler or Wilson Steer?

At this period our young artist began his Journal, which developed into an invaluable

addition to art criticism. At first of course it is redolent of a young man's important introspection; packed with nervous self-analysis. All the more interesting, however, as a revelation of his sincere and noble character; of all things he seems to have been aware most of the duality of Nature, that more or less must disturb us all, and of his great need, if his art should prevail, of stamping out the sensual lower part. Thus introspective, and as we have said, with all youth's tremendous solemnity, no wonder if at times these pages let us see a morbid and hysterical young man. But soon this natural phase is pushed aside by the criticism and observation of a thoughtful artist, and for a period of forty years the Journal liberally gives us of his rich stored knowledge, observation, and keen discrimination. It makes, in fine, a valuable complement of those rare analyses of art by artists.

In 1824 the "Massacre de Scio" we have referred to appeared. Its theme was suggested by Gros' "Pestiférés"; its conception was inspired by Géricault, and for key our painter had turned to Constable, with whose revelations that year in Paris he became acquainted. As we might expect, since the word is always fired off at what exceeds our accepted ideas, the critics deplored

the ugliness of the *Massacre*, a fact seeming barely credible to-day. With the death this same year of Géricault a strong influence was lost. Another and a less happy was picked up next year in England, where with the Fieldings and Bonington he was studying. Here, not only did he acquire a little of the atmospheric Scotch feeling of Wilkie, but also an intense enthusiasm for the theatre. To this *qualité théâtrale* is due the weakness of Delacroix' art; its lack of Vitality and reticence. For of the profound significance, and that elusive sensation of human experience and disconcerting, unsuspected complexities that Rembrandt, Millet, or Puvis suggest he rarely conveys anything. He seems to have appealed for his inspiration less to Nature than a not particularly well-stocked imagination. In his "Sardanaple" of 1828 this unconvincing staginess intrudes. Though not on this score it was violently criticised, and he himself was disappointed with it. That year too was exhibited the "Marino Faliero," of Hertford House, in which this weakening shallowness does not disappoint us. On this point of Delacroix' deficiency we might be excused asking wherein after all lies his difference from Ingres, his implacable enemy. David and Ingres submerged

Vitality beneath the inanimate comportment of Græco-Roman statuary, for which Delacroix substituted violent gesticulation in a Byronic atmosphere. But Vitality is not necessarily in these. Rather in little pieces of such pictures, in direct studies from the model, human or animal, and in the simpler subjects, such as "Le Lever," he really grasped that quality. In these latter too he most attains repose and strength of design, owing to the absence of weakly extended limbs linking, but inadequately, scattered masses, and to the presence of firmer perpendiculars wherewith to mitigate the inevitable limpness of undulating "serpentines."

For a short while this "Sardanapalus" brought official censure on him. M. de la Rochefoucauld, Minister of the Fine Arts, gravely advised him to study drawing and seek another style. Simultaneously State purchases ceased. But in six months' time from this same person and from the Duc d'Orléans he was obtaining commissions, and from the Duchesse de Barry. Apropos of the temporary check the "Sardanapalus" brought on him, he writes: "Retarding the sublime and puissant gifts Nature endowed me with is the problem how to pay my way; 'my kingdom is not of this world.' The rare genius I have just allows

of my living like a shopwalker." To us with our notorious *froideur* this sort of thing reads a little vauntingly; but we should bear in mind that in the Gallic temperament it does not imply an inflated idea of self. As a matter of fact, most of the prominent painters with whom we have been dealing gave at one time or another a similar expression of their consciousness of genius. Fragonard's crude boast is apparently one of the main delights of French criticism. Delacroix *pour lui* struck all who knew him as remarkably modest and free from what we have heard called "side." He seems, in fact, to have been one of the best type of popular man; shy and reticent, loathing haphazard incursions into his studio. Refined and polished, well-read and an excellent talker; immensely respected for the incorruptible sincerity of his work, and for the self-denying devotion he gave to it. It is related that nothing he permitted to interrupt him when *en train* with some one of his almost furious inspirations; regardless of his need of food or the fever from which nearly always he suffered, while the wave carried him on he would persist. Towards the last, thinking so to do better work, he took but one meal in the day. And while at his easel he would be plunged as it were into a sort of uncon-

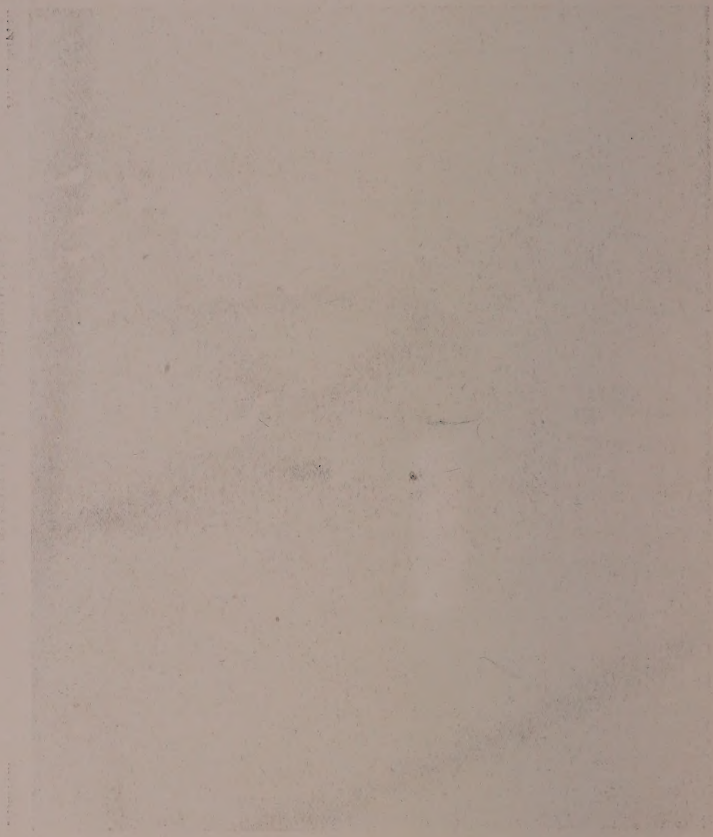
scious state. Once a friend was watching him marvellously evolving from chaos a horseman at full gallop, reaching up to catch the carbine he had thrown into the air. To the spectator's concern the upraised hand of the *chasseur* grew to enormous proportions, far out-scaling the rider's body. At last he said gently: "What *are* you doing, Maitre?" Delacroix, who had been furiously working, puffing and blowing the while, at the interruption came back to consciousness. He scraped the picture out, saying: "It's very hot in here; I think I'm going mad," and went out to the street. It ever was a delight to see him create. At a birthday party of Alexandre Dumas' the assembled artists had to do a time sketch, as a souvenir for their host. Arriving late, Delacroix, too impelled to lay aside his coat and gloves, sat down to his sketch. From apparently incomprehensible charcoal scrawls he evolved a characteristic scene of hostile sky and landscape, and the grim aftermath of battle. Dumas used to say that it took Delacroix relatively longer to set his palette than to paint his picture. This particular sketch, it is recorded, took him three hours.

To resume, however, our brief notice of the sequence of events. In 1831 he showed what

*Delacroix* *Photo. Mereau*

THE TAKING OF CONSTANTINOPLE

*(Louvre)*



was perhaps his nearest move upon Naturalism as distinct from Romanticism. In "Liberty at the Barricades" he achieved, in the head of the top-hatted citizen, a quite remarkable pitch of significant interpretation, comparable with the best the Naturalists later could show. The next year he went to Morocco and to Spain, there finding incalculable incentives to his passion for colour and Byronic sentiment. The year following, on his return to Paris, he was given—through Adolphe Thiers—the order for decorating the Salon du Roi in the Chamber of Deputies, which he finished in four years, receiving 30,000 francs in payment. The Institute, as we may suppose, was highly shocked that such important commissions should go to so heretical a painter; and on the score of size even Delacroix' friends were uneasy, since hitherto he had worked on a comparatively small scale. With characteristic thoroughness he went to the expense of long experimental studies of the processes of fresco. It is to be regretted that so much of his large decorative work he had to entrust to assistants, owing to his health.

While thus he was successful with the world of patronage, it was another pair of sleeves with the Académie. Thither he sent in his name in

1837 for election to the Chair at the Beaux Arts, left vacant by Gérard's death. A Davidian, Schnetz, was put up into it. In '38 again he applied; again in '49. In '53 his candidature was refused, and it was not until his sixth attempt in '57 that he received an Academic chair. The tale goes, undisputed we believe, that only then did he get in by the vote of the musician members of the Institute, who recalled the painter's love of their profession. For twenty years, then, he had waited for what was but of little use. In defence of what now looks, as then too it did, undignified solicitation, Delacroix had a reasonable case. For one thing then there was no possible recourse to a worthier society, as nowadays is open to the distinguished painters who can find no fit reception in Academies. For another he supposed that his influence would be of counteractive value in the stronghold of Davidian reminiscences, though, as in another place he owned, it was hardly likely that what he drew out from Nature would be negotiable. Much of course has been made of this enforced wait of twenty years. But we need not exclaim, nor should we postulate that Academies in their opposition to "Revolutionaries" are not actuated by most honourable scruples. The narrowness and stupidity of these

is another matter; but beyond doubt men like Ingres were assured that their adored mistress Art would be irremediably defiled by the dishonesty of those who might seek to embrace her by other than the Ideal way. The ideal of those days was Abstract Beauty; of late we have seemed in danger of accepting that of Ideal Ugliness. That word (applied, as already noted, to every new thing) yet preserves a real significance; since everything ugly is not beautiful, at least unless it contain the definite conditions of Beauty, external, relative, and interior.

For six years Delacroix enjoyed occupation of the Academic chair. The last part of his life, packed with work, overcrowded with projects, was largely taken up by the numerous decorations entrusted to him; the ceiling of the Apollo Gallery in the Louvre; the Salon de la Paix at the Hotel de Ville; the Chapelle des Saints Anges. The strain of all this vastly taxed his poor strength. Since 1859 he had refused to exhibit at the Salon because a cloud of hostile criticism had settled on his pictures of that year. One gentleman, more enterprising than the rest, deplored the incipient senility of a man of just sixty years.

In May '63 he went down to his house at

Champrosay. By August 3rd he felt the game was up. Sending for his lawyer, he spent two hours dictating his elaborate will, and on the 13th died. The last entry in his Journal was made on June 22nd, and it largely sums up the relations of an artist to the public. "The prime merit in a picture is delight given to the eye. I would not say it has no need of subject, but it is like good poetry, which, if it offend the ear, not all the subject in the world will prevent being wretched. '*To have an ear*' is the regular phrase. In the same way, all eyes are not attuned to appreciate the delicacies of painting. Many have untrue or unobservant eyes; they can see literal objects, yes; but the rare, the exquisite, no." Here, as in many other passages, Delacroix echoes unconsciously the conclusions of the other great artist critics. Had we space it were an engrossing business to set forth his singularly just views on those problems that most assault the painter, connoting them with the published opinions of the others. Throughout his Journal we can trace the influence of the great masters on him in their varying degrees. One of his earliest ambitions was to unite in one style the firmness of Michelangelo and the diffusion of Velazquez. Towards the last we see him putting his "Christ

going up to Calvary" up against a little Watteau he possessed, and deducing from the comparison the infinite value of a light background to throw up the darks and semi-darks, "while the flesh of course tells higher than the background." In actual painters' technique and in ordinary philosophy his Journal is abundant. It is curious to note his persistent dissatisfaction with himself, especially on the charge of idleness; and instructive to remember in front of the ceaseless evidence he affords as to his peculiar need of feminine sympathy and society, that he resolutely remained celibate, consecrating his undistracted life to Art. But for his journey to Morocco and Spain and quick visits to Belgium, England, and Germany, he was no traveller: life was too full to admit of leisure.

He died in '63. Thirteen years later M. Delaborde, the secretary of the Académie des Beaux Arts, made up his mind to pronounce the regular obituary address. In 1885 a public subscription at length was raised, by an exhibition of the dead artist's work, to provide a decent monument. Five years later, from Dalou's hands, the group was set in place.

To Delacroix and his corps the chief debt of Art is for the restoration of colour and atmos-

phere to their rightful place; and for their insistence that beauty has necessarily no connection with the Canon of Ideal Beauty, and that Art may more profitably be engaged upon the living world than with a dead convention. Indomitably our artist pushed onward the outposts of attack against the paralysing forces of Academism.

# INDEX

*More important references are indicated by the use of heavier type*


ACADÉMIE, Destruction of, 293
"Agony in the Garden, The" (de Troy), 181
"Aigles, Les" (David), 282
"Alva, Duke of" (Ingres), 312
"Amants heureux, Les" (Fragonard), 220
"Amour Réduit" (Prud'hon), 261
Angelico, Fra, 308
"Anthony, Mme." (Prud'hon), 262
Apollo Gallery (Louvre), 333
"Apotheosis of Homer" (Ingres), 316
Architecture, French, 7, 8, 10
Arena-Caracci Conspiracy, 299
Argenville, de, 168, 169
"Assumption, The" (Boucher), 201
"Assumption, The" (Prud'hon), 265
Audran, Claude, 114, 115
"Austerlitz, Battle of" (C. Vernet), 233
Aved, 150, 151
"Aveugle trempé, L'" (Greuze), 245
Avolara, Anna, 81

BABUTY, Mlle., 248
Bachaumont, 238
"Baigneuses, Les" (Fragonard), 220
"Bains d'Apollon" (Robert), 239
"Baiser, Le" (Fragonard), 220
"Balancoire, La" (Fragonard), 237
"Ball under a Colonnade" (Watteau), 117
"Bara" (David), 294
Barberini, Cardinal, 48, 49
Barrons, 118
Bartolini, 308, 312
"Bathsheba" (de Troy), 177
Baudouin, 198, 207, 225
Beauvais, 199, 201
Beethoven, 311
Belin, Nicholas, 27
"Belle Jardinière, La" (Delacroix), 314
"Belle Zélie, La" (Ingres), 309
Bellini, G., 268
Benedictines, Abbaye des, 253
Bérain, 113
Bertin, 271
Besson, Curé, 253, 260
Blancard, M., 22
Bolognese, the, 211, 259, 288, 308
Bonington, 323, 327
Both, Andries, 60
Bouchardon, 163
Boucher, 5, 6, 102, 146, 148, 163, 173, 183, 184, 185, 186, **190–205**, 206, 208, 209, 210, 241, 255, 267, 269, 285, 286, 287
Boucher, Mlles., 197
Bouchot, Henry, 30, 33, 34, 43
Boule, 89, 107, 113
Bourdichon, John, 24, 27, 28, 30
Bourdon, Sebastian, 51, 64, 65
Boutelou, William, 21, **41–43**
Breysan, Peter, 38
Briard, 275
Brill, Paul, 55
Brouwer, 112
"Brutus, Junius" (David), 291, 292, 293, 295
Budé, Catherine, 17
Buzeau, Marie, 197

CAFFIERI, 180
"Callirhoé et Corésus" (Fragonard), 212, 213, 214
Camargo, Mlle., portrait of, by Lancret, 131, 159
"Capture of Jerusalem, The" (N. Poussin), 48
Caracci, the, 90
Carmontel, 239
Cars, 194
"Cassandra and Apollo" (Herculaneum), 291
Castiglione, Benedetto, 196
Catherine, Empress, 279
Caylus, Comte de, 164
Cazes, 136, 141
Chalgrin, Mme., 224, 294, 295, 299
Champaigne, Philip de, 66
Champion, Petit-Jean, 28, 29, 30
Chantelon, M. de, 49
Chantilly "Book of Hours," 16, 17, 18, 19
Chantrey Fund, the, 325
Chardin, 46, 109, **135–152**, 204, 209, 231, 269, 273, 286
Charonton, Enguerrand, 20
"Chasseur à Cheval" (Géricault), 321
Châteauroux, Duchesse de, 271
Chevalier, Stephen, 15, 16, 18, 19
Christina of Sweden, Queen, Bourdon's portrait of, 65
Claude, 58, 226, 230
Claude of Valois, portrait of (Corneille de Lyon), 41
Clausen, G., R.A., 325
Clouet, Francis, 29, **31–35**
Clouet, Jehan, **27–30**
Colbert, 69–73, 75, 77, 83, 86, 103, 105, 106, 114
"Colin Maillard" (Fragonard), **236**
Colombe, Michel, 23
"Condé, Princesse de" (Drouais), 273
Conservatoire du Museum, 223, 240
Constable, J., 232, 325, 326
Corneille de Lyon, 34, **36–41**
Corot, 230
Correggio, 186, 199, 259, 288, 308
"Coucher des Ouvrières" (Fragonard), 216
Courbet, 314
Coypel, A., 87, 166, 167, 183
Coypel, C. A., 87, 183, 185, 186
Coypel, Noël, **85–87**, 118
Coypel, Noël Nicholas, 87, 137
Cressent, 107
Crozat, 116, 117, 164
"Cuirrassier Blessé" (Géricault), 321
Cüyp, 58, 59

D'ALEMBERT, 162
Dalou, 335
"Dante and Virgil" (Delacroix), 325
David, 196, 206, 208, 217, 223, 234, 239, 249, 250, 254, 259, 263, 264, 267, 280, **282–302**, 303, 304, 309, 313, 315, 319, 320, 321
David, Gerard, 14
"Death of Germanicus, The" (N. Poussin), 48
"Déjeûner d'Huîtres" (de Troy), 177
Delacroix, 184, 251, 261, 304, 313, 314, **319–336**
Demachy, 226, 234
Deshays, 198
Desportes, 97, **98–100**, 101
Devosges, 254, 260, 262
"Diane sortant du Bain" (Boucher), 200
Diderot, 146, 162, 191, 192, 199, 203, 204, 212, 238, 246, 248
Dimier, 43
Domenichino, 47, 48
Doyen, 215, 275
Drouais, 201, 273
Du Barry, Mme., 216, 217, 218, 224, 278
"Duchess of Milan" (Holbein), 247

Dumas, A., 330
Duplessis, 269
Du Quesnoy, 47
Dürer, 255

EARLOM, Richard, 57
"Education de La Vierge" (Fragonard), 220
Elgin Marbles, 297
"Embarkation for Cythera" (Watteau), 118, 119
Eugenius IV, Pope, 16
"Eylau, La Battaille de" (Gros), 320

"FABLES of La Fontaine," Oudry's tapestry designs for, 102
Faye, M. de la, 126, 127, 128, 129
Fel, Mary, 160–162
Fergioni, 228
Fielding, 324, 327
"Fils Puni" (Greuze), 248
Flandrin, H., 309
Flémalle, the Master of, 13
"Foire de St Cloud" (Fragonard), 236
Foulon, Benjamin, 33, 34
Fouquet, 15–20, 21, 28, 268
Fragonard, Alexandre, 222
Fragonard, J. H., 5, 148, 190, 191, 204, 206–225, 236, 237, 240, 255, 262, 263, 267, 269, 273, 282, 286, 287, 329
Fragonard, Rosalie, 221
Francis I, King, 28, 31, 32
Froment, Nicholas, 22

GAIGNIÈRES, Roger de, 36, 37
Galloche, 168
"Gardens of a Roman Villa" (Fragonard), 236
Geoffrin, Mme., 187, 192
Gérard, F., 284, 332
Géricault, 251, 304, 321–323, 325, 326
Gersaint, 121
Ghirlandaio, 24
Gillôt, Claude, 113, 114, 119, 124, 125
"Gimblette, La" (Fragonard), 220
Giordano, L., 196
Giorgione, 130, 268, 317
Girtin, 240
Gobelins, the, 73, 75, 76, 83, 84, 101–104, 105, 178, 179, 199, 202
Goebow, 93
Goethe, 175
Goncourts, the de, 146, 207
Goya, 7
"Grasse Panels, The" (Fragonard), 218
Greuze, 221, 240, 241–250, 263, 264, 270, 273, 275
Grimm, 203, 212, 217
Grondon, 243
Gros, 287, 320–321
Guercino, 175, 176
Guerin, 321, 324, 325
Guéty, Bartholomew, 27, 30
Guido, 90, 128, 168, 186, 211
Guimard, Mlle., 216, 217, 282

HALL, 221
Hals, Frans, 214
Hamilton, Lady, 278
Haranger, Abbé, 121
"Hasards heureux, Les" (Fragonard), 214, 215
"Heartless Love" (Prud'hon), 261
"Hercule, Salon de" (Lemoine), 171, 184
"History of Esther" (de Troy), 178, 179
"History of the King" (Meulen), 84
Holbein, 27, 40
Hooch, Pieter de, 148
"Horaces, Les" (David), 225, 259, 290, 293, 296
Hulin, George, 43
"Hunt Breakfast, The" (C. van Loo), 185
Hunt, W., 318

INGRES, 238, 255, 287, **303–318**, 327, 333
Ingres, Mesdames, 311

"JASON and Medea" (de Troy), 179
"Jelyotte" (Tocqué), 272
"Jeune Fille debout" (Fragonard), 220
Josephine, Empress, 264
"Journal de Delacroix," 325, 334, 335
"Joursanvault, Mme. de" (Prud'hon), 260
Jouvenet, 166
"Justice and Vengeance" (Prud'hon), 265

KAUFFMAN, Angelica, 278
"Kermesse" (Rubens), 117

LABILLE GUIARD, Mme., 281
Laborde's "Comptes des Bâtiments," 41
La Caze Collection, 214
Lamarie, 288
Lamballe, Princesse de, 276
Lancret, Nicholas, **123–131**, 133, 134, 148, 159, 167
Lanfranco, 169
Largillière, 88, **92–96**, 100, 141, 269
Latour, 151, **153–163**, 164, 165, 187, 192, 269
Lauri, Francesco, 60
Lavrience, 207, 225
Le Bas, 142, 143
Le Brun, 51, **73–78**, 79, 81, 83, 84, 86, 88, 90, 91, 95, 97, 105, 106, 108, 114, 166
Leczinska, Marie, 272
"Leda" (Prud'hon), 262
Legros, 184
Lely, Sir Peter, 93, 95, 155, 156
Lemoine, **166–173**, 174, 178, 181, 182, 183, 184, 190, 194, 196, 198, 199
Le Nain, the brothers, 45, 46, 65
Leonardo, 259, 260, 308
"Leonidas" (David), 300, 301
Lépicié, 204, 231, 233, 234, 269, 273
Le Sueur, Eustace, 65, 66
"Lever, Le" (Delacroix), 328
"Lever de Fauchon, Le" (Lépicié), 273
"Liberty at the Barricades" (Delacroix), 331
Limousin, Leonard, 32
Lin, Pierre du, 124
Lippi, Filippo, 308
"Livres de Raison," 229
Loo, C. van, **182–189**, 192, 196, 203, 212, 269
Loo, Caroline van, 187
Loo, J. B. van, 6, 137, 164, 183, 184
Lorraine, Claude, **54–60**
Louis XIV, 68, 69, 82, 84, 88, 105, 106
Louis XIV, Art in the Reign of, 3, 8
Louis de Boullogne, 166, 167, 171
"Louis XIII, The Vow of" (Ingres), 312, 313
Louvois, 77
Luti, 184

"MALIBRAN" (Ingres?), 309
Malouel, Jean, 13
Manet, 314, 324
Manglard, 228
"Man Reading" (Lépicié), 273
Mantegna, 247
"Marat" (David), 294
Maratti, C., 168
Marie Antoinette, 221, 273, 275
Mariette, 164
Marigny, de, 203
Marino, 48
"Marino Faliero" (Delacroix), 327
"Mars and Venus" (David), 300
"Massacre of Scio" (Delacroix), 313, 326
Mayer, Mlle., 264, 266
Mazarin, 68, 69
Mead, Dr. Richard, 120
"Medusa, Raft of" (Géricault), 322
Meire, van der, 20
Meissonier, 107, 198

Meissonier, Juste Aurèle, 142
Melun, the diptych of (Fouquet), 16, 17
Memlinc, 14, 19, 24
Menagerot, 285, 288, 290
Mercier, Philip, 120
Meulen, Adam Francis van der, 83, 84, 88, 95
Michelangelo, 175, 211, 288, 291, 308, 317, 334
Mignard, 77, **79–83**, 89, 95, 269
Millet, 245, 251, 318, 327
"Minerva uplifting Genius" (Prud'hon), 265
Miniaturists, the, 12
Molière, 81
Montagnac, John de, 20, 22
"Mordechai, The Triumph of" (de Troy), 178
Moreau-Nélaton, M., 43

NAIGEON, 258
"Naissance de Venus" (Boucher), 200
Nanteuil, 65
Napoleon, 233, 264, 283, 297, 298
Narbonne, the "Parement" of, 10, 11
National Gallery, 218
"Nativity, The" (Boucher), 201
"Nativity, The" (Rembrandt), 128, 129
Natoire, 180, 183, 245, 259
Nattier, **269–271**
Neapolitan School, 211, 259
Neo-Classicists, 226, 285
Nicasino, 98
"Niobe" (de Troy), 176

"ODALISQUE, La" (Ingres), 316
"Œdipus" (Ingres), 310
Ostade, van, 301
Oudry, 97, 98, **100–104**, 199, 200

PANINI, 235
Paolo Veronese, 115, 117, 130
"Paralytic Father, The" (Greuze), 248
"Paris and Helen" (David), 291
Pater, Jean Baptiste, 123, 126, **131–134**, 148, 167
"Père expliquant le Bible, Le," (Greuze), 244, 245
Perréal, Jean, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30
Perronneau, 151, 153, **163–165**, 269
"Pestiférés de Jaffa, Les "(Gros), 320, 326
Phidias, 297
Piero da Cortona, 169, 196, 211, 260
Pigalle, 245
Pilon, Germain, 32
"Plague of Marseilles, The" (de Troy), 177, 321
"Poésie, Epique" (Boucher), 200
Pompadour, Mme. de, 157, 158, 200, 201, 269
Poncel, 84
Portail, 145
"Ports of France" (Vernet), 231
Pouget, Frances, 145
Poussin, Gaspard, 53, 54
Poussin, Nicholas, **46–51**, 52, 63, 97, 136
Premier Peintre, Le, 171, 173, 174, 183, 185, 186, 187, 203
Primitives, the French and Flemish, 9
"Prisoner of Chillon, The" (Delacroix), 314
Prud'hon, **251–268**, 308
Prud'hon, Mme., 261
"Psyche and Zephyrs" (Prud'hon), 285
Puvis de Chavannes, 306, 327

QUAI, Maurice, 296

"RAINBOW, The" (Rubens), 52
Raphael, 186, 210, 211, 256, 259, 260, 287, 291, 308, 309, 310, 313, 315
"Recamier, Mme." (David), 306
Regnault, 284, 286, 288, 290, 294
Rembrandt, 61, 111, 128, **222**, 268, 301, 317
René, King, 20, 23
Requin, Abbé, 20

Reynolds, 280, 291
Richelieu, Cardinal, 49
Rigaud, **88–92**, 95, 269
"Rivière, Mme." (Ingres), 309
Robert, Hubert, 211, 221, 226, **234–240**, 263, 285
Robespierre, 224, 239, 262, 295, 297
Rochechouart, Gabrielle de, 40, 41
"Rogero et Angelica" (Ingres), 312
Rondot, Natalis, 43
Rosalba, 164, 165
Roslin, 202
Rousseau, Jean Jacques, 158, 162, 258
Rubens, 52, 72, 93, 111, 112, 115, 117, 130, 219, 256
Rude, 254
Rüysdael, 58

"SABINES, Rape of the" (David), 296, 297
"Sacre et Intronisation, Le" (David), 282
Saintard, Margaret, 143, 144
Saints-Anges, Chapelle des (Delacroix), 333
St Aubin, G., 210, 234
"St John Preaching" (Boucher), 201
St Non, Abbé, 212, 221, 236
"Salon de la Paix" (Delacroix), 333
Sand, Georges, 310
Sandrart, Joachim, 56
"Sardanaple" (Delacroix), 327, 328
Sargent, J., R.A., 324
"Senate deciding on Peace or War" (Fragonard), 223
Sérin, Z. A., 112
"Seriziat, M." (David), 297
Sirois, 115, 119, 121
"Skate, The" (Chardin), 140, 142
Slodtz, 235
"Socrates" (David), 291
Snyders, 83, 97
Solimena, 211
Sommis, Christine, 184
Sorel, Agnes, 17, 18
"Soul Quitting the Earth, The" (Prud'hon), 266
Squarcione, 285
Steer, Wilson, 325
Stevenson, R. L., 175, 203
Subleyras, 301
"Surprise, The" (de Troy), 177
Suvée, 290, 291, 293
"Sylvia" (de Troy), 177

TASSI, Augustine, 55, 56
"Temple of Janus, The" (Fragonard), 223
Teniers, 112, 301
"Tennis Court, Oath of the" (David), 293
"Thetis" (Ingres), 310
Tiepolo, 211
Titian, 111, 115, 117, 130, 256
Tocqué, 269, **271**, **272**
Topino-Lebrun, 283, 299
Tovot, Ballot de, 127
"Triumph of the Virgin" (Charonton), 21
"Triumphs of the Gods, The" (Coypel), 86
Troy, F. de, 174
Troy, J. F. de, 167, 170, 171, **174–181**, 182, 183
Troy, Mme. de, 179
Turner, 58, 60

VAN DER WEYDEN, Rogier, 19
Vandyck, 72, 91, 96, 112, 155, 156
Van Eyck, 11, 14, 19, 20, 268, 318
Varin, Quintin, 46
Velazquez, 7, 72, 111, 334
"Venus and Adonis" (Prud'hon), 265
"Venus and Cupid" (Prud'hon), 262
Vermeer, Jan, 148
Vernet, C., 221, 232, 295, 321
Vernet, H., 232
Vernet, J., 187, **226–233**, 275, 294

"Verrou, Le" (Fragonard), 216
Victoria and Albert Museum, 177, 201
Vien, 217, 285, 287, 288
Vigée Lebrun, Mme., 269, **274–281**
Vincent, 284, 286, 290, 291, 294
"Virgin and Child" (Fouquet), 17, 19
Vleughels, 119, 179
Voltaire, 162, 173
Vos, Martin de, 112
Vouet, Simon, 51, **62–64**, 65, 74, 80, 108
WALLACE COLLECTION, the, 172, 200, 201, 214, 236, 265, 327
Watteau, **111–122**, 124, 125, 126, 130, 131, 132, 133, 163, 166, 167, 176, 181, 190, 191, 194, 195, 204, 206, 208, 218, 221, 225, 226, 240, 243, 245, 251, 268, 286, 335
Whistler, 325
Wilkie, 327
Wille, 148, 149, 257
Wilson, 58
Winckelmann, 235, 285
"Wisdom and Truth" (Prud'hon), 263

THE END

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
Edinburgh & London

GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
3 3125 01845 4179